



# Honor and Shame in the Deuteronomic Covenant and the Deuteronomistic Presentation of the Davidic Covenant

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Honor and Shame in the Deuteronomic Covenant and the  
Deuteronomistic Presentation of the Davidic Covenant

A dissertation presented

by

James Nicholas Jumper

to

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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in the subject of

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to identify the semantics of honor and shame in the Hebrew Bible and to demonstrate how these social values intersect with Israel's fundamental social organizing principle, covenant. Though many scholars have claimed that honor and shame are pivotal values for biblical Israel and that covenant is fundamental to her conception of the divine-human relationship, no work attempting to explore the juncture of these two important social phenomena has appeared. Thus, our study has two major goals: (1) establish the semantics of honor and shame in the Hebrew Bible; and (2) demonstrate that honor and shame, however conceived in context, are pivotal to biblical Israel's understanding of her covenantal relationship with YHWH in Deuteronomy 28 and 2 Samuel 7.

With regard to Deuteronomy 28, which defines Israel's understanding of covenantal fidelity, we show that honor is depicted as pre-eminent military and economic status among the nations and as a major goal of the covenantal blessings and designed to motivate Israel to greater loyalty (vv. 1, 13). Shame, however, is not just the loss of pre-eminent status (vv. 44, 48), but also the loss of social existence (v. 68). The explicit covenantal formulation of both values appears unique to Israel, despite her adoption of other ancient Near Eastern covenantal forms.

With regard to the 2 Samuel 7, we argue YHWH honors David and Zadok with eternal royal and priestly positions because Saul and Eli failed to honor YHWH (e.g., 1 Sam 2:30), but also because David and Zadok would be loyal (e.g., 2:35). As a result,

David will be given “a name like the name of all of the great ones of the earth” (2 Sam 7:9), denoting David’s military superiority (8:13). Moreover, we show that from a Deuteronomistic perspective, the discipline of the Davidides in 2 Samuel 7:14–15, entails royal shaming (1 Kgs 11:31). Thus, we prove that, while honor and shame are variously conceived in both covenants, they are pivotal to our understanding of the divine-human relationship in the Hebrew Bible.

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For  
Michael, Elijah, Nicholas, and Zachary

## Abbreviations

ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
<i>Am Ethnol</i>	<i>American Ethnologist</i>
<i>Am J Sociol</i>	<i>American Journal of Sociology</i>
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , ed., J. B. Pritchard, 3d ed., Princeton, 1969
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AT	<i>Annales theologici</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	<i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , ed., Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, Oxford, 1907
<i>Ber</i>	<i>Berytus</i>
BHH	<i>Biblisch-historisches Handwörterbuch: Landeskunde, Geschichte, Religion, Kultur</i> . Edited by B. Reicke and L. Rost. 4 vols. Göttingen, 1962–1966
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BWL	<i>Babylonian Wisdom Literature</i> , W. G. Lambert, Oxford, 1960
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> , Chicago, 1956–
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Ed. By W. W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden, 1997–.
<i>Crit Anth</i>	<i>Critique of Anthropology</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
CTU	<i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places</i> . Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. Münster, 1995.
<i>Curr Anth</i>	<i>Current Anthropology</i>
EA	El-Amarna Tablets, according to the edition of J.A. Knudtzon, <i>Die el Amarna-Tafeln</i> , Leipzig, 1908-1915, reprint, Aalen, 1964, continued in A. F. Rainey, <i>El-Amarna Tablets, 359-379</i> , 2d revised ed., Kevelaer, 1978
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> , ed., E. Kautzsch, transl. by A. E. Cowley, 2d ed, Oxford, 1910
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and</i>

	<i>Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , transl. and ed. under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson, study ed., 2 vols, Leiden, 2001
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
Hum Stud	<i>Human Studies</i>
IBHS	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> , B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, Winona Lake, Ind., 1990
ICC	<i>International Critical Commentary</i>
IESBS	<i>International Encyclopedia of the Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</i>
IJCM	<i>International Journal of Conflict Management</i>
IntQ	<i>The International Quarterly</i>
J Nurs Educ	<i>Journal of Nursing Education</i>
JANESCU	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
Jastrow	Jastrow, M. <i>A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature</i> . 2d ed. New York, 1903
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
Joüon	Joüon, P., <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> , transl. and revised by T. Muraoka, 2 vols, Subsidia biblica 14/1–2, Rome, 1991
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAI	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . H. Donner and W. Röllig. 2d ed. Wiesbaden, 1966–1969
KHC	<i>Kurzer Hand-Commentar Zum Alten Testament</i>
KJV	<i>King James Version</i>
L&N	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . Edited by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida. 2d ed. New York, 1989
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9th ed. with revised supplement, Oxford, 1996
NAS	<i>New American Standard Bible</i>
NIB	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NIBC	<i>New International Biblical Commentary</i>
NIDOTTE	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> , ed., W. A. VanGemeren, 5 vols, Grand Rapids, 1997
NIV	<i>New International Version</i>
NLT	<i>New Living Translation</i>
NRSV	<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTS	<i>Library of Hebrew/Old Testament Studies</i>
OtSt	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RHA	<i>Revue hittite et asianique</i>
SBLABS	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies</i>
SBLDS	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</i>

SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> , ed., G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, transl. by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, 8 vols, Grand Rapids, 1974–
ThWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Stuttgart, 1970–
TLOT	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by E. Jenni, with assistance from C. Westermann. Translated by M. E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, Mass., 1997
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TWOT	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr. 2 vols. Chicago, 1980
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	<i>Vetus Testamentum Supplements</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 The reason and purpose of this study

Over the past century scholars have profitably explored the notion of covenant in Israel and the ancient Near East; and as Saul Olyan has noted, “Few would dispute that covenant was a primary basis for social organization in the West Asian cultural sphere in which Israel emerged as a distinct polity.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, most social anthropologists have noted that honor and shame are central social values of the Mediterranean. But as Olyan noted further, “...the points of contact between the universe of covenanting and the notions of honor and shame have yet to be explored in any depth.”<sup>2</sup> Olyan began to fill this lacuna in scholarship with his 1996 article “Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and Its Environment,” though he never actually treats the various accounts of the Abrahamic, Sinaitic or Davidic covenants. Presumably he would have done so had he pursued his intended follow-up monograph.<sup>3</sup>

David Daube, while not attempting to tackle the intersection of Israel’s social values and covenant, aimed to treat the “shame culture” underlying Deuteronomy.<sup>4</sup> For him, guilt and shame permeate the motivations for right-doing in every class of every culture,<sup>5</sup> but his brief study only addresses how certain Deuteronomic laws have an

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<sup>1</sup> S. Olyan, “Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and Its Environment,” *JBL* 115, no. 2 (1996): 201–202.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 202.

<sup>3</sup> Olyan did not intend to analyze Israel’s relationship with her deity in his article, only human relationships. He explores 2 Samuel 19:1-9, 2 Samuel 19:10-44, 2 Samuel 10:1-6, 1 Samuel 31 / 2 Samuel 1–2, and Lamentations 1.

<sup>4</sup> D. Daube, “The Culture of Deuteronomy,” *Orita* 3 (1969): 27–52.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

underlying concern with “appearances,” a principle which Daube believes pervades “shame cultures.”<sup>6</sup> What is surprising is that he does not address how shame might be involved in, for example, the Deuteronomic curses, which would have seemed a natural area to explore.<sup>7</sup>

The same inattention to covenant is more glaring in the only works that address the shame in the divine-human relationship. Amy Cottrill, Lyn Huber, and Joanna Stiebert profitably discuss YHWH’s shame without ever exploring the social context of that shame, namely, covenant.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, from what we can tell, our work seeks to be the first major step in addressing the junction between Israel’s “primary basis for social organization” and what some scholars have claimed are her central social values, assuming for the moment that honor and shame, however defined, are central to Israel’s social values. We have, though, chosen to restrict ourselves largely to Israel’s and her king’s relationship with YHWH. Because the Deuteronomic Covenant and the Deuteronomistic formulation of the Davidic Covenant have had a major impact on later Israelite literature, we have strategically chosen to concentrate on how honor and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>7</sup> It is perhaps his guiding principle “of appearances” that prevents him from understanding how shame is present within the divine-human relationship. When speaking about the Deuteronomic curses, Daube asserts, “Now evidently, where it is God himself before whom you wish to preserve appearances, we are approaching the realm of guilt. Perhaps one way of putting the matter is to say that what substantially pertains to guilt is represented here in terms borrowed from shame. Which testifies all the more powerfully to Deuteronomy’s shame cultural leaning. It also shews that Deuteronomy is nothing if not ambivalent, the Fourth Gospel of the Pentateuch.” Ibid, 50. Lurking behind Daube’s statement is also the assumption that guilt is to be connected with the transgression of moral principle (law) and is to be contrasted with a violation of socially inculcated norms.

<sup>8</sup> A. Cottrill, *Language, Power, and Identity in the Lament Psalms of the Individual* (OTS 493. New York; London: T&T Clark, 2008). Lynn Huber originally published her dissertation under the name Bechtel and later published articles under the name Huber. We will refer to her works under the name Huber. L. Bechtel, “The Biblical Experience of Shame/Shaming: the Social Experience of Shame/Shaming in Biblical Israel in Relation to its use as Religious Metaphor” (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1983), 3. J. Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution* (JSOTSup 346; Sheffield Academic Press, 2006).

shame inform our understanding of divine-human covenants. Our primary questions of this study will be: What are the various semantics of the concepts of honor and shame in the Bible? Are any of these concepts central to Deuteronomy 28 and 2 Samuel 7, two key texts delineating the divine-human relationship with Israel and her king, respectively? Because of the importance of these texts to later Israelite thought, we hope to answer the question of whether honor and shame are pivotal values and how they may add to our understanding of these covenants.

### 1.1 The justification for this study

The lack of literature on this subject may seem justification enough for some to pursue a study of this type, yet if covenant and honor and shame really are central to Israelite thinking, one must wonder why there is a near absence of literature on how they related to one another. Perhaps one reason is latent in the opening words of Joanna Stiebert's volume on shame in the Major Prophets: "This book seeks to explore shame in the Major Prophets, because it is in these three biblical books – Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel – that shame vocabulary is most prevalent."<sup>9</sup> The reality is that traditionally identified shame vocabulary (e.g., בושׁ, חרף and כלם) is absent or occurs infrequently in covenantal contexts.<sup>10</sup> None of these common roots appears in the context of any

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<sup>9</sup> J. Stiebert, *Construction*, 1. M. A. Klopfenstein and Seebaß independently note the same fact. See M. A. Klopfenstein, *Scham und Schande nach dem Alten Testament. Eine Begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu den Hebräischen Wurzeln bôš, klm und hpr* (ATANT 62; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 29, 118. Stiebert quotes Seebaß who speaks on the pre-8<sup>th</sup> century use of the root בושׁ. In his view, "It almost seems to be that this dimension of the human condition on a broader level (i.e., outside of the language of the Psalms) had only been discovered in the time of the Major Prophets." See Seebaß, "בושׁ," *ThWAT* 1:570–71. See J. Stiebert also in "Shame And Prophecy: Approaches Past And Present," *BibInt* 8, no. 3 (2000): 255. Interestingly, it is not that Stiebert believes that there was a huge cultural transformation in later Israelite culture where shame was more acutely experienced, as Seebaß appears to, but that the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. provides "the salient event that has given rise to shame discourses." J. Stiebert, *Construction*, 2. We would generally agree with her assessment.

<sup>10</sup> The occurrences of nominal and other forms do not change these results much. For example, כְּלָמוֹת, כְּלָמָה or חֶרְפָּה do not appear in Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel 7 or any promise to Abraham. The same



version of the Abrahamic covenant; none is present in either version of the Sinaitic Covenant; and none occurs in any version of the Davidic Covenant.<sup>11</sup> The same can be said for honor words like כבוד. For instance, כבוד does not occur in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7), and it only appears twice in all of Deuteronomy, once applied to obeying YHWH (Deut 5:16) and a second time to describing YHWH's name (28:58).

One would think that if these social values were *pivotal* to Israel's fundamental relationship with YHWH, we would find at least one occurrence of one of these words in such contexts. If the divine-human covenant is modeled at all on human covenants, then at first blush covenant and honor and shame appear to be unrelated. And if honor and shame were not associated with Israel's fundamental social organizing principle, then these values are at best tangential to biblical Israel.

The situation becomes more puzzling if one expands the search to include other related biblical literatures, as indicated by Stiebert. For example, בוש appears thirty-four times in the psalms and thirty-six times in Jeremiah. And when we start adding up nominal forms that occur in Jeremiah, the prophet appears to focus on "shame." Reflexes of חרף appear thirteen times and various reflexes of בלם ten times. The book of Jeremiah, which by most scholars' account is Deuteronomic in its sympathies,<sup>12</sup> is replete with "shame" vocabulary when it comes to speaking about covenantal curses.

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could be said for בוש. The only exception is the lone occurrence of גְבוּשִׁים, commonly rendered "genitals" (Deut 25:11).

<sup>11</sup> It is equally as interesting that "guilt" vocabulary is completely absent or nearly so from Deuteronomy. We should not, therefore, conclude that Israelite experience was devoid of any concepts of guilt or shame, either juridically or psychologically. The "problem" with the absence of certain shame or guilt terminology is likely created by modern expectations of how "religion" functions in human experience and how we expect "religion" to linguistically represent shame, honor, guilt, etc. in certain contexts.

<sup>12</sup> For example, see M. Weinfeld. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 320–361, esp. 359–61.

Such a situation makes it appear that the societal concern for honor and shame appeared late in Israelite history, triggered by Babylonian captivity.

As we will show in the following chapters, the biblical writers represent a variety of concepts of honor and shame in Deuteronomy or the Deuteronomistic History in a number of social contexts, which demonstrates how fundamental these values were to the Israelites' Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic notions of covenant. In our view, honor and shame are as critical to Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History as they are to Jeremiah, but the Deuteronomistic History represents these social values with a variety of vocabulary, expressions, rites, and social descriptions. As we have said and will show in our lexical chapter, the semantics of honor and shame are more complex than the simple presence or absence of the "traditional" lexica. For example, the blessings section of the Deuteronomic covenant begins with the summary: "If you strictly obey YHWH your God by observing all of his commandments which I am commanding you today, YHWH your God will *place you high above all* of the nations of the earth (וַתִּתֶּנְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֲלִיּוֹן עַל כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ) (28:1). This summary blessing represents honor by borrowing from a semantic high-low (societal) contrast. The blessed position Israel receives in her privileged relationship with YHWH is expressed in the same terms as YHWH's over the earth. Psalm 83:18 states, "Let them know that you, your name, O YHWH, you alone (LXX σὺ μόνος) are *above all of the earth* (שִׁמְךָ וְהוֹדָ לְבָרְךָ עֲלִיּוֹן עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ) (וְיָדְעוּ כִּי-אַתָּה)." The concepts of "name" (שִׁמְךָ) and social position are honorific,<sup>13</sup> and it comes as no surprise that the blessings of Israel, among other things, are designed to

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<sup>13</sup> In fact, such high-low social language occurs within the context of the more "traditional" shame language in this psalm. The psalmist prays that the punishment of the faces of the nations who plot against Israel and YHWH would be filled "shame" (קָלֹן, v. 17), be put to shame (בוש, v. 18a) and perish in "disgrace" (חפז, v. 18b). Moreover, the psalmist prays that the enemies would become "dung for the ground" (וְהָיָה לְרֵגֶל יְהוָה, v. 11), a fate set aside for their honored nobles (vv. 12–13).

honor YHWH's covenantal partner by placing his people above the nations. Thus, the exact terms of preeminence await enumeration in the description of the Deuteronomic blessings.

We would like to note before moving on that Deuteronomy 26:19 confirms our suggestion by associating the phrase “Israel above all of the nations” with honorific words like “praise” (תְּהַלֵּלָהּ), “fame” (שֵׁם), “honor” (תִּפְאָרֶת) and a “holy people” (עַם־קֹדֶשׁ).<sup>14</sup> So, in the covenantal contexts we treat in our study, we will find then that honor is represented as high position, status or esteem.

Shame in this context will be represented a bit differently, which shows the complexity with which these values are depicted. Among the many punishments the Israelite will suffer for their disobedience, they will return to Egypt and be sold as slaves, but will fetch no buyer (v. 68). Without a patron, Israel will be *without any social status*.<sup>15</sup> Even if Deuteronomy 28:1 and 28:68 should belong to different literary strata from different periods, it would only emphasize the enduring importance of these social values in Israel's fundamental relational, organizing principle. In addition to such statements, we will find that many of the blessings and curses themselves function to raise or lower Israel's social standing in the eyes of the nations.

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<sup>14</sup> While we do not explore this suggestion in our study, that Israel is a “holy people” denote their special, honored status as a result of YHWH's gift to them.

<sup>15</sup> As is well known, in many group-oriented societies being outside the legal and economic protection of a household (in Israel the *beit*) would put an individual at severe risk of starvation or injustice. Deuteronomy offers such protection to the resident alien (Deut 1:16; 24:17, 19–20; 27:19). But what is more, in the Bible, one's status is connected to the household or group to which one belongs. For example in 1 Samuel 9:21, when Samuel confers the honor of kingship on Saul, Saul protests that “I am from...the least of the tribes of Israel” (יְשָׁרְאֵל שְׁבִטִי יִשְׂרָאֵל) and the his family is “the least of all the clans of Benjamin” (בְּנֵי־מִן וּמִשְׁפַּחְתִּי הַצְעֵרָה מִכָּל־מִשְׁפָּחוֹת שְׁבִטִי). Saul's “protest” highlights the low, undeserving status of his kin to receive such a grand honor from the deity. In context of the Deuteronomic curses, then, Israel will be rejected in Egypt, even by the least household, thus not attain the worth of those with the lowest status. They will be a social nothing.

In like manner, the Deuteronomistic presentation of the Davidic Covenant includes the promise to make David a “name...like all of the great ones of the earth” (2 Sam 7:9). As in Deuteronomy 26:19, making “a name” for David clearly refers to the significant worldwide reputation David will receive when YHWH gives him victory over Israel’s enemies (8:13). The fact is, honor and shame are defining aspects of Israel and her king’s relationship with YHWH. But the terms honor and shame—and we will defer defining these concepts for now—are not articulated with traditionally identified vocabulary, but by a wider number of expressions. In any event, we hope to show that there is very good reason for pursuing such a study, despite the absence of certain key vocabulary, all without superimposing a so-called Mediterranean model, which we will discuss shortly.

As we will demonstrate, a positional view<sup>16</sup> of honor and shame is fundamental to the Deuteronomic writers’ understanding of the blessings and curses, the central mediating section of that covenant, as well as Deuteronomistic writer’s presentation of the Davidic covenant.<sup>17</sup> In particular, we will show that the positive motivation behind the Deuteronomic blessings lies chiefly in the high position they will bestow upon Israel, and conversely, the power of the Deuteronomic curses lies mainly in their power to reduce Israel’s social position to social nothingness. Similarly, the Deuteronomist’s presentation of Saul, David and even YHWH’s rejection of David’s offer to build his patron God a temple revolve around the loss and retention of a positional view of honor. According to the Deuteronomistic Historian, the status of Saul’s house is nearly reduced

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<sup>16</sup> By “positional view” we mean the relative high social status or esteem one possesses because of financial success, familial or societal position, or highly valued actions. This is in contrast to an “emotive view,” namely how a person or others might feel about the position or accomplishment.

<sup>17</sup> Later additions to the Deuteronomistic History seem to enforce the original work’s view of honor and shame, not diminish it. For an example, see our discussion of the additions to the David and Goliath narrative.

to nothing (the loss of power, progeny, etc.), and survives only as a client of David's house. Thus, what this study offers is to fill the gap in our current approach to covenant by showing how central honor and shame are to the Israelite conception of their fundamental social organizing principle, even with YHWH.<sup>18</sup> In doing this, we will shed new light on an old problem associated with the Davidic covenant, the rejection of David's offer of a temple for YHWH.

## 1.2 The biblical scholarship of honor and shame

In order to frame the approach we take in this study, it is important first to review where current scholarship has come with regard to honor and shame. We will not discuss the history of scholarship regarding covenant here, but have chosen to speak about our view of particular covenants in the chapters in which those covenants appear. In any event, after discussing various approaches to honor and shame, especially in relationship to the Bible, we will outline our own methodological choices.

The discussion on the biblical scholarship of honor and shame will be divided into two parts: works that take a "psychological" (guilt-shame) approach and works that take an "anthropological" (honor-shame) approach. We must make two caveats. First, we wish to cover only representative scholarship that has contributed to the field. Second, and most importantly, while some works neatly fall into one or the other of our categories, other works do not. The choice to divide biblical scholarship into these two "camps" is only meant to be a convenient tool for our discussion and should not be understood rigidly. Such a mistake would only result in mischaracterizing many authors and skewing their views. To avoid oversimplification, we will nuance our discussion of each work we discuss.

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<sup>18</sup> We will not, however, attempt to demonstrate that honor and shame are central to human covenants. Our results, however, would accord with Olyan's views, by and large.

### 1.2.1 Psychological approaches

Long before modern scholars turned toward honor and shame, thinkers before and after the Common Era had long recognized the importance of these social values.<sup>19</sup> Even in the intervening centuries, honor and dishonor continued to undergird many prominent works of Western literature.<sup>20</sup> Analytical approaches<sup>21</sup> to the study of honor and shame came largely with the birth of the social sciences. Most notably, Sigmund Freud's work on shame spawned a new direction in thought on the subject. For Freud, shame emerged as an affective response to a conflict between superego and id.<sup>22</sup> Shame, therefore, is an individual's conscious or unconscious affective reaction when failing to

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<sup>19</sup> Many of the wise sayings of Ben Sira involve honor and shame (e.g., 4:20–6:4; 10:19–11:6; 41:14–42:8). On the importance of honor in Ben Sira, see D. J. Harrington, *Jesus Ben Sira of Jerusalem: A Biblical Guide to Living Wisely* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2005), 86–88. For Aristotle, honor is the reward for ἀρετή (“virtue”); and as José Carlos Del Ama notes, “The outline of [Aristotle’s] human ideal, the ‘magnanimous man’...rests on honor. He will be concerned mainly with honor and dishonor; as Aristotle asserts in the *Ethica Eudemia* ...he may be thought of as a man of honor.” J. C. Del Ama, “Honor and Public Opinion,” *Hum Stud* 32, no. 4 (2009): 441–60.

<sup>20</sup> Of course, honor is variously construed in Western literature, but however it is presented, the struggle with gaining or maintaining one's honor is a main feature of many a protagonist. For example, while the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Don Quixote* was a satirical look and the ideals of honor and chivalry, Don Quixote is not a completely unsympathetic character. In 19<sup>th</sup> century literature, Dostoevsky dedicates book six in his magnum opus *Brothers Karamazov* to wrestle with the struggle between the dictates of honor and Christian morality. When the wanton military officer Zosima, after having found faith in Christ the night before a duel, must now wrestle between the immorality of fighting a duel and the shame of avoiding it. George Martin's popular 21<sup>st</sup> century 5-volume series, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, reveals how powerful and relatable honor and shame are to the modern imagination, though pointedly contrasted with the human ambition for power. G. R. R. Martin. *A Song of Fire and Ice*. (5 Vols.; New York: Bantam Books, 1996–2011). More volumes are forthcoming. One pivotal character, Jon Snow, the bastard son of the honorable Eddard Stark, attempts to prove his honor by joining the knights at the northern wall. When taking the new guards take their vows, the Lord Commander Mormont tells them, “A man of the Night's Watch lives his life for the realm. Not for a king, nor a lord, nor the honor of this house or that house, neither for gold nor glory nor a woman's love, but for the realm, and all the people in it. A man of the Night's Watch takes no wife and fathers no sons. Our wife is duty. Our mistress is honor. And you are the only sons we shall ever know.” G. R. R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones* (New York: Bantam Books, 1996), 498.

<sup>21</sup> It is not that previous attempts lacked analytical rigor, but previous thinkers largely focused on the judgment of character, morality and society. In the ideal, social sciences have the goal of focusing on the formation or the function of shame in moral systems without prescription. In the practice of applying social theory, shame and guilt are generally shunned (to pun) among modern scholars. For example, see M. E. Bond, “Exposing Shame and its Effect on Clinical Nursing Education,” *J Nurs Educ* 48, no. 3 (2009): 132–40. Guilt receives the same treatment.

<sup>22</sup> The superego is the internalized parental and social prohibitions or ideals, which act as censor upon the ego, loosely equated with conscience; and the id is the inherited instinctive impulses of the unconscious.

meet imbedded cultural ideals. Guilt is the response of transgressing authority and the fear of punishment. Following Freud, Gerhart Piers, a psychoanalyst, and Milton Singer, an anthropologist, believed that shame resulted from a conflict between the ego and ego-ideal, that is, shame is the response to the failure to meet a parental or societal goal. Guilt, conversely, is the affectional response that arises between the ego and superego, namely the emotional response when a rule is transgressed.

Helen Lynd<sup>23</sup> in the same decade also took an interdisciplinary approach to studying shame.<sup>24</sup> Using the Piers' definition of shame that shame is an unexpected inadequacy of reaching an ideal,<sup>25</sup> her study explored questions relating to the nature and significance of shame in relation to human identity and group belonging. She sees shame as the fear of and the actual rejection of one's social position. Thus, it is a state and the emotive effect of that state. On the one hand, it is abandonment, rejection and loss of social position, and on the other, it is one's affective reaction to those things.<sup>26</sup> Guilt is tied to wrongdoing, and shame is associated with a sudden deficiency in one's being that leads to feelings of inferiority. Thus, like Freud, she makes a distinction between shame and guilt.<sup>27</sup>

Lastly, sociologist Helen Lewis analyzed the transcripts of psychoanalytic sessions and found that shame results from the fear of being socially disconnected from

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<sup>23</sup> Formally speaking, Helen Lynd was a sociologist, however, her approach *On Shame and the Search for Identity* also relied on insights from the psychoanalytic tradition. T. J. Scheff, "Shame and the Social Bond," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. Eds. Neil, J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Amsterdam; New York: Elsevier, 2001), 14037. See, H. M. Lynd, *On Shame and the Search for Identity* (New York: Science Editions, 1961).

<sup>24</sup> T. J. Scheff, "Shame," 14037.

<sup>25</sup> Shame for Piers is described as the as an unexpected inadequacy to reach an ideal which causes a wound to one's self-identity and G. Piers and M. B. Singer, *Shame and Guilt* (New York: W. W., Norton and Company, Inc., 1953).

<sup>26</sup> H. M. Lynd, 24.

<sup>27</sup> J. Stiebert, "Shame and Prophecy," 256.

others. What is perhaps most valuable in her work is how shame is masked by emotions like anxiety, anger, fear and grief.<sup>28</sup>

Huber sums up the psychological approach to shame well: “Shame relates to internalized ideals or idealized picture of self...Shame is the tension or anxiety which arises when there is failure or inadequacy to sustain these valued personal assets or to live up to the ideals. This failure or inadequacy violates pride, and the response to violation of healthy pride is shame.”<sup>29</sup> The psychological effects have physical manifestations: avoiding another’s gaze, blushing or slouching.<sup>30</sup> Guilt, on the other hand, is seen as the emotion associated with breaking rules that govern society. When understood socially by those like Lewis and Thomas Scheff<sup>31</sup> after her, shame is a part of a larger set of emotions (shyness, modesty, etc.) that are augmented by a fear of social alienation and rejection.

Among the earliest approaches to shame in the Bible that explored the shame and guilt distinction is Martin Klopfenstein’s *Scham und Schande nach dem Alten Testament*. It is somewhat inaccurate to classify his work as “psychological,” as Klopfenstein was attempting a thoroughgoing lexical study of “shame” and “guilt” words. He does, however, understand shame and guilt as binary opposites. In any event, Klopfenstein studied the roots חַפְּזָה and כָּלֵם, בּוֹשֵׁת.

We would agree with his result that “...the conceptual complex ‘shame/disgrace’ spans the entire spectrum of psychological, social, political-militaristic, forensic, cultic, religious (and peripherally, even cosmic) diminution of life, indeed what renders life

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<sup>28</sup> H. B. Lewis, *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis*. New York: International Universities Press, 1971.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. L. Huber, *Biblical Experience of Shame*, 4.

<sup>30</sup> J. Stiebert, “Shame and Prophecy, 256. L. Huber, *Biblical Experience of Shame*, 55.

<sup>31</sup> T. J. Scheff, “Shame,” 14038–39.



powerless.”<sup>32</sup> Moreover, we agree that these shame words have no clearly defined antonym.<sup>33</sup> Where we differ is that we do not necessarily believe that *בִּיְשׁוּ* had its Ur-association with sexuality (e.g., Gen 2), only to later acquire some type of forensic association. While Klopfenstein’s example in Isaiah 50:6–7 could survive under scrutiny, the same is unlikely in Isaiah 1:29. As Stiebert points out, the “oaks” in Isaiah 1:29, which Klopfenstein claims are a judicial context, can hardly be construed in this way.<sup>34</sup> Also, shame need not be connected to transgression. The social position of orphans, widows and barren women is connected to shame, yet none of them bears any sense of guilt for their position. In fact, YHWH provides and defends for them all (Deut 26:12; Ps 68:6). While these results often seem strained to us in other contexts, Klopfenstein’s work is thorough and painstaking.

Daube’s study, to which we referred above, believes that there is a “strong shame-cultural element in Deuteronomy” that owes itself to the book’s connection to wisdom.<sup>35</sup> Wisdom for Daube emanates from a circle of elders who teach others how to avoid shame.<sup>36</sup> While affirming that Deuteronomy is not bereft of connections to the emotion of guilt,<sup>37</sup> he claims that the primary motivation for doing right is concern for

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 208. “Der Begriffskomplex “Scham/Schande” umspannt somit das ganze Spektrum psychischer, sozialer, politisch-militärischer, rechtlicher, kultischer, religiöser (und als Randerscheinung sogar kosmischer), Lebensminderung, ja Lebensohnmacht.” All translations from German are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>34</sup> M. A. Klopfenstein, 60–61. J. Stiebert, 92–93.

<sup>35</sup> D. Daube, 27.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 28. Daube comments, “The guilt mechanism to a large extent presupposes the single towering figure of a father. In as far as Wisdom governs, authority is more diffused, appeal is made to a large number of people who are of correspondingly less overwhelming stature – the neighbours, peers, well-thinking citizens and so forth: it is in these conditions that shame culture tends to come to the fore.” Ibid, 52.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

reputation and keeping up appearances.<sup>38</sup> He explores a variety of passages that he believes displays this shame-culture element: Deuteronomy 20:8 (the command for fainthearted troops to return home),<sup>39</sup> 22:1–4 (the command against not caring [lit., “hiding oneself,” חָסַד] about a neighbor’s lost or fallen livestock), 22:13–21 (the accusation of a non-virgin bride), 25:12–14 (taking anything indecent thing outside the camp), 23:1–8 (the laws concerning who shall be admitted to the YHWH’s assembly), and 23:12 (the law about burying excrement outside the camp).

While we do not have space to review each of his examples, we can illustrate the limits of his approach. In Deuteronomy 22:1–4, the idiom “hiding yourself” that appears in the injunction of taking care of one’s neighbor’s livestock is chiefly concerned with “appearances.” “What it means is that you may not give in to the temptation to avoid an awkward sight, and in a manner which dispenses with straight, open refusal. To be ashamed involves unwillingness to see and unwillingness to be seen.”<sup>40</sup> It is by no means clear that the idiom here is not referring to hiding oneself from the responsibility to one’s neighbor. At the very least he needs to argue for such his reading. At other times when he is on more solid ground, it hardly proves that Israel was a “shame culture.” For example, it is clear to us that fainthearted troops in Deuteronomy 20:8 would be shamed for desertion, but the same would also be true of the modern United States, despite the fact that most scholars label it as a Western “guilt” culture.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 28, 34, 41, 41, and 50.

<sup>39</sup> One must wonder how such a law emanates from a wisdom tradition. But what is more, Daube really fails to make clear how we should understand the connection between wisdom and Israelite culture. Is it just that wisdom ideology influenced the Deuteronomic writer(s) or was it that Israelite culture was deeply influenced by some type of wisdom school that seeped into the Deuteronomic formulation of the Sinai traditions? If it is the former case, then we cannot conclude that there is a *shame culture* behind Deuteronomy.

<sup>40</sup> D. Daube, 28.

His general principle “keeping up with appearances,” therefore, hardly seems tenable in establishing Israel as a “shame culture.”<sup>41</sup> It appears to us that Daube needs to show that fundamental relationships between people are mediated through these values. If he could an exploration of the connections between honor and shame in covenant is in order.

In 1983 Lyn Huber’s unpublished dissertation became one of the first extended studies on shame in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>42</sup> Her approach to shame and shaming was decidedly psychoanalytical.<sup>43</sup> As such, she accepts the shame / guilt binary distinction, though she parts criticizes Klopfenstein’s view of guilt and shame on two grounds. First, she does not find that guilt is inherent in the meaning of “shame” and “shaming” words, but that he connects guilt with shame theologically.<sup>44</sup> More importantly, she continues, “as interrelated as shame and guilt are at times, they are, in our view and in the view of psychoanalytic and social anthropological theory, separate emotional reactions.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, by applying these psychoanalytic concepts to her study of the Bible, she assumes the universality of the psychoanalytic construction of human emotions across human cultures throughout the centuries.

To her credit, she dedicates her entire fourth chapter to shame in the divine-human relationship, even if she is mostly interested in how shame is used as a means of

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<sup>41</sup> Joanna Stiebert’s detail review comes to insightful conclusions, which I generally agree with. J. Stiebert, 38–41.

<sup>42</sup> L. Huber, *Biblical Experience of Shame*, 3. Johannes Pedersen’s study is a notable exception. Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 28–29; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1991), 213–44. The only full monograph, as far as we can tell relating to the subject, was Klopfenstein’s.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 3–8.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

social control.<sup>46</sup> What is perhaps most valuable in her work is that she delves into the subject of God's shaming and God's being shamed, the latter issue receiving far less attention than it deserves.

The weaknesses of Huber's work are a bit more glaring, however. Inexplicably, she seems to ignore completely Mediterranean anthropology<sup>47</sup> on honor and shame, as well as Malina and Elliot's important early work, which we will discuss below. Because of these omissions, Huber only devotes a small discussion to the fight for superiority among the gods where she approaches an positional notion of shame (and honor).<sup>48</sup> Oddly, despite the fact that she sees theomachy as rooted in a fight for superiority, where honor and shame is at stake, she does not seem to contemplate the role of honor. What is more, the largest oversight in our estimation, pertains to our purposes, covenant. Despite her study of shame in the divine-human relationship and shaming in rivalries of superiority among the gods, she never speaks about the terms of Israel's relationship to YHWH. In our view, it is clear that the basis for YHWH's shame is his covenantal solidarity with Israel. Even when he chooses to chastise them for disloyalty by allowing them to be defeated in battle, he must also bear the same shame they do, as

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Instead, she draws her comparative cultural examples from more distant peoples: the Chinese, Japanese, Pacific Islanders, and the native peoples of North America, to mention several examples. L. Huber, *Experience of Shame*, 248–69.

<sup>48</sup> Section IV of her last chapter is devoted to shaming in contests between the gods. L. Huber, *Experience of Shame*, 176–185. Following Patrick Miller, Huber recognizes the "struggle for position," "rank," and "superiority" among the gods with the ultimate goal of answering the question "Who is the high god?" Ibid, 176. See P. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 64. In this same context, she admits that honor, among other qualities like power that the gods strive for, can be the opposite of shame. In her discussion regarding the contests between YHWH and Baal, Huber recognizes that YHWH is concerned with being the "High God," but she never identifies "honor" as a form of superiority and shame as type of inferiority, at least explicitly. L. Huber, *Experience of Shame/Shaming*, 178. For her, it seems to us, "shame" is largely relegated to an affective reaction to failure or defeat.

he appears to other nations as inferior to their gods.<sup>49</sup>

### 1.2.2 The biblical scholarship on shame (and honor): Anthropological approaches<sup>50</sup>

Pedersen, from what we can tell was one of the first scholars to treat Israelite society and the concepts of honor and shame.<sup>51</sup> For him, honor is a substance that is bestowed on the soul through blessing; and for him, there is no book that better exemplifies life values than Job. With his large family and fertile livestock, Job is conceptualized as a man “rich in blessing,”<sup>52</sup> and as a result his honor is manifest in the market place as even the elders show deference to his superior counsel (Job 4:3–4; 29:21–25). “Honor,”<sup>53</sup> however, is not how others conceive of an man, but that “which

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<sup>49</sup> Hezekiah’s reign is depicted as one in which he trusted in YHWH (בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; 2 Kgs 18:5), which is symbolized by his fidelity to YHWH and his commandments (vv. 4–6). The fall of Samaria is attributed to the North’s infidelity to YHWH (vv. 9–12). Though Hezekiah seemingly concedes to Sennacherib (v. 16), his efforts are, according to the Deuteronomist, a verbal stratagem (v. 20). Rabshakeh besieges Jerusalem; and he queries Hezekiah on behalf of the “great king” of Assyria, “Do not allow Hezekiah to cause you to trust in YHWH, saying YHWH will surely deliver!” (v. 30a). Rabshakeh goes on to ask if any of the gods of the nations have delivered from Sennacherib’s hand (v.33). YHWH delivers Jerusalem, but what is clear is that YHWH’s international reputation when compared to the “great king” of Assyria is tarnished in the defeat of Samaria; thus, the Deuteronomist makes clear that it was Samaria’s disobedience, despite what the nations may think about YHWH’s sullied status.

<sup>50</sup> We have already reviewed some noteworthy examples of researchers who combined sociological and psychological approaches to shame. And while we will not go into any depth discussing the contribution of sociologists, we should refer to some important studies. See an early article by G. Simmel. G. Simmel, “Fashion,” *IntQ* 10 (1904): 130–55 [reprinted *Am J Sociol* 62, no. 6 (1957): 541–59]. Cooley paired shame with pride, as processes of self-monitoring. C. H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (C. Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1922). Elias’s monumental effort to study personality and social norms in manners sees shame as profoundly emerging in the 18<sup>th</sup> century society. N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*. Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 1922. Sennett and Cobb’s study revealed that publicly educated working class men in the 20<sup>th</sup> century U. S. lack self-esteem because their schooling did not allow them to develop their unique talents to stand out from the masses. R. Sennett and J. Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. Knopf, New York, 1972. Employing Cooley’s categories of pride and shame, Goffman’s work explores how individuals are concerned about self-image and seek to avoid embarrassment. E. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*. Anchor, New York, 1967. According to Scheff, until Goffman, no sociologist had attempted even a partial definition of the emotional experience of shame. T. Scheff, “Shame,” 14037–38.

<sup>51</sup> J. Pedersen, 213–44. Also, he dedicates pages 245–259 to a discussion of “name.”

<sup>52</sup> See his various examples on pages 216–222. He later states, “...wealth and prosperity form an essential part of his [Job’s] honor.” *Ibid*, 224. Even more he states, “Blessing always creates honour, simply because of its creating prosperity.” *Ibid*, 230.

<sup>53</sup> In fact, honor is conceived of as “weightiness,” the word picture denoted by כָּבֵד. So, for Pedersen, honor is the weightiness of the soul, and as such a man’s wealth and honor are described as “weightiness.” And this weightiness becomes his “strength” (חֵיל). *Ibid*, 230.

actually fills the soul and keeps it upright.”<sup>54</sup> His view is not estimative, but ontological in nature. It should be noted that honor belongs to a “great soul” who possess “ability and strength.”<sup>55</sup> Thus, greatness is relative to persons in themselves and with regard to others. As such, Pedersen buttresses his views of honor in Job with those of Judges like Gideon, Jephthah and Samson because of their great deeds. It was the greatness of each of these individual’s souls that produced their heroic actions.<sup>56</sup> With these heroes and Job, honor depends on the societal harmony produced by the great deeds, as the great individual is the giver of goods to the poor or counsel (e.g., Job) that come from the individual’s strength.<sup>57</sup> As such, when great men fail to produce harmony by giving of their wealth and wisdom, they no longer retain their honor.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, for Petersen there exists a mutual relationship between wealth and honor. On the one hand, wealth makes a man great and augments his soul. Great men are adorned with rings, scepters, and crowns.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, “property is imbued with the essence of the owner.”<sup>60</sup> A man’s garments and all of his possessions is “penetrated by and absorbed into his soul.”<sup>61</sup> Thus, there is a type of reciprocal relationship between the honor of the soul and what honors it.

A woman’s honor is conceived of differently from a man’s, and she is often praised for being a good wife and furthering her husband’s name by granting him sons.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 213.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 223.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 225.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid 226–27.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 229.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 228.

Generally speaking, however, she is not, Pedersen claims, praised, because her life is full of suffering.<sup>62</sup>

Because Job is his primary example for honor, he is also a primary example for shame. A man might be shamed for not having the courage to maintain his honor or being defeated in battle, but a chief reason for shame is losing blessing.<sup>63</sup> And just as honor is found in one's body, so shame is displayed in the body. It is found in posture, as one might raise or lower the head. It is found in adornment. Just as fine clothes express honor, the removal of clothes expresses shame. Insulting words also shame combatants.<sup>64</sup> Lastly, for Pedersen the concept of humility that leads to honor is not part of the older conception of honor, but a development. Such a concept came after Israel's harmonious and flourishing period.<sup>65</sup>

We would agree that the conception of honor is tied to that of blessing in the Deuteronomic covenant, as we have briefly indicated. And many of those blessings have to do with wealth, victory in battle and fecundity. Honor, however, is not merely tied to these things. We will argue that because YHWH is Israel's covenant God and because shame and curse are tied together in the Deuteronomic formulation of the Sinai covenant, YHWH's shame is implied in curse. One cannot separate the honor of a god from that of his people from an outsider's point of view.<sup>66</sup> Lastly, we might criticize the way Pedersen uses cross-cultural data to buttress his arguments, comparing the honor

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 231.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 231–32. While he claims that “shame” is “lacking heaviness,” he oddly does not cite the root קָלָה.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 243.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>66</sup> It seems to us that Pedersen's examination of honor tends to make it an individualistic social entity. He ignores the social implications of national, tribal and family honor.

he finds in Job to the Arabian ideal of a chief.<sup>67</sup> Such analogies show that if he is correct about his case in the Bible and if he is correct about his understanding in, say Bedouin culture, then we have two comparative mentalities among people that have existed about three thousand years apart. But demonstrating the nature of the relationship between the same social patterns in both cultures is another question altogether. Such comparisons are too easy to draw based on surface similarities between social customs rather than on the deeper social structures that may have given rise to them.

It is to more recent efforts that we now turn. In the past thirty years, following Bruce Malina's highly influential *Social World of the New Testament*, the Context Group<sup>68</sup> has had the greatest influence on anthropological and sociological approaches to biblical scholarship. Seeing that historical-critical scholarship had become atomistic in its approach to the Bible, their main goal has been to place the Bible in its complete socio-cultural context.<sup>69</sup> Without abandoning the tools of historical and linguistic criticism, the Context Group rooted their method in the ethnographic work of a particular group of Mediterranean anthropologists and sociologists<sup>70</sup> in the mid-twentieth century. The first work to appear among these anthropologists was J. K. Campbell's 1964 study, *Honour, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community*, whose work sparked continued interest in the

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<sup>67</sup> See, for example, pages 222, 224, 231 and 234.

<sup>68</sup> While the members of the Context Group have similar goals, it should not be assumed that they are monolithic on all points; however, for the sake of constructing a general frame for our discussion, we will not qualify variously differences between its members.

<sup>69</sup> J. H. Neyrey, *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), ix-x.

<sup>70</sup> These scholars are often deemed "Mediterraneanists" or "pan-Mediterraneanists," as they believe that the Mediterranean is a cultural unit whose societies exhibit a "Mediterranean personality," which we will describe below. It should be noted, that even this characterization, is a bit overdrawn as both Julian Pitt-Rivers and Peristiany both eschewed a purely geographical approach to the concept of a Mediterranean.



region that coalesced into,<sup>71</sup> a collection of essays that were published in *Honour and Shame: The Values of the Mediterranean Society*.<sup>72</sup> The contributing chapters were said to “reveal the continuity and persistence of Mediterranean modes of thought.”<sup>73</sup> In particular, all the cultures of the Mediterranean demonstrate an overriding focus on a binary pair of social concepts, honor and shame, which serve as pivotal values to organize societal relations. Honor is viewed as the “apex” of all social values that “conditions their hierarchical order.”<sup>74</sup> “Honour and shame are the constant preoccupation of individuals in small-scale, exclusive societies where face to face personal, as opposed to anonymous, relations are of paramount importance and where

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<sup>71</sup> J. G. Peristiany, ed., “Introduction,” in *Honour and Shame: The Values of the Mediterranean Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 9. The contributors were Peristiany, Julian Pitt-Rivers, Julio Caro Baroja, J. K. Campbell, Pierre Bourdieu, and Ahmed Abou-Zeid.

<sup>72</sup> It should be noted that cross-cultural insights and models were used to illumine the Bible long before the advents of Peristiany’s volume. Victor Matthews and Don Benjamin note that Renaissance thinkers like Cornelius Bertramus (1574) and Cavaletto Signonius (1583) contemplated biblical government politics. Johannes Henrich wrote on biblical ritual (1656). For more see, V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250-587 BCE* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), xxii. W. Robertson Smith’s comparative study, while suffering methodological weakness, was a critical step in cross-cultural sought to apply insights in Bedouin culture to ancient Israelite biblical culture. Hermann Gunkel’s work on oral tradition and folklore (1917) was a critical step in biblical studies, as it joined a study of biblical literature with the institutions and social-historical contexts that produced them. Max Weber, Albrecht Alt, Martin Noth, H. H. Rowley’s studies delved into Israelite culture, state formation and tribal systems. Of special note is Roland de Vaux’ *Ancient Israel*, which sought to describe Israel’s cultural institutions. Most recently, there are more attempts to reconstruct the daily life of the Jewish in the first century CE or of the Israelites. See Oded Borowski, *Daily Life in Biblical Times* (SBLABS 5. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003). P. J. King and L. E. Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Library of Ancient Israel (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001). J. Magness. *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2011). The amount of scholarship that has contributed to our social understand of the Bible is too vast to recount here.

<sup>73</sup> J. G. Peristiany, ed., “Introduction,” 9.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 10. We should not think that these authors treat honor monolithically or statically, and there was an attempt to be philologically precise about the contexts they studied. For example, Julio Caro Baroja concludes after his historical survey of legal, theological, literary and historical works in Spain that not only does the concept of honor change over time, but also that there may be competing systems of honor in a historical period. He concludes that in the middle ages there were two systems of conceptual systems of “honour” that co-existed, one that stemming from religious, philosophical and legal principles, and the other from factual situations. J. C. Baroja, “Honour and Shame: A Historical Account of Several Accounts,” in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Edited by J. G. Peristiany; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1966), 96. Campbell’s discussion of the conflict between social and religious honor among the Sarakatsani is another good example. J. K. Campbell, “Honour and the Devil,” in Peristiany, 141–70.

the social personality of the actor is as significant as his office."<sup>75</sup> In the contributors' understanding, therefore, honor is an individual's self-assessment conditioned on a complex interaction of societal elements:<sup>76</sup> family, lineage, wealth, moral standing, social class, and accomplishment. While the Mediterranean cultures share a pre-occupation with the attainment of honor and the avoidance of shame, this social element is variously represented in the Mediterranean cultures.<sup>77</sup>

Nonetheless, one might speak generally about some commonalities. A man's claim to honor is a claim to commensurate treatment,<sup>78</sup> and claims to honor must be constantly proved and asserted among his equals, who constantly challenge his claims.<sup>79</sup> If he is unable to defend his honor (and, hence, his group's honor), it will be defiled and lost to another.<sup>80</sup> Thus, honor is conceptualized as limited commodity.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>76</sup> In Pierre Bourdieu's words, "Honour is the basis of the moral code of an individual who sees himself always through the eyes of others, who has need of others for his existence, because the image he has of himself is indistinguishable from that presented to him by other people." P. Bourdieu, "Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society," in Peristiany, 211.

<sup>77</sup> Julian Pitt-Rivers states, "[Honour] is not of course a single conception common to all the peoples who dwell along the littoral of [the Mediterranean]—how could it be with such a variety of cultures?—but rather a common premise found in all the societies of that area regarding the relations between power, sex, and religion; hierarchy, endogamy and the sacred are the three principles which come together in the notion of honour." J. A. Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem: The Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 19; Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1977), viii.

<sup>78</sup> Pitt-Rivers states, "Honour. . . provides a nexus between the ideals of a society and their reproduction in the individual through his aspiration to personify them. As such, it implies not merely an habitual preference for a given mode of conduct, but the entitlement to a certain treatment in return." Pitt-Rivers, *Fate of Shechem*, 1.

<sup>79</sup> For an example, see P. Bourdieu, "Sentiment of Honour," 214.

<sup>80</sup> Urban societies differ, as they present multiple, competing models for conformity. Individuals may identify with many different groups. Ibid, 12 and 25.

<sup>81</sup> Scholars who identify with the Context Group use the term "limited" instead of "conservative," noting that the ancients viewed honor as a limited social commodity for which individuals and groups vied. In our study, we use the term "conservative" to describe honor. The term is taken from science where a particular sum of a measurable quantity (e.g., mass, energy, etc.) in an isolated system does not change despite evolution in that system. When energy (or in our case, honor) increases in one part of a system, it decreases equally in another. We choose this term for two reasons. First, the biblical writers do

That is, one cannot gain honor unless another loses it through shame. Thus, in Mediterranean cultures honor is understood as a limited commodity; shame, its binary opposite is the loss of honor, and groups are vying for honor and avoid its loss (i.e., culture is agonistic).

For individuals of differing status, those of lower status must act and speak in a manner that acknowledges the status of one higher (e.g., a father, ruler, etc.). And their honor, at least partly, derives from their connection to others of higher status, often in a patron-client relationship. Such relationships are understood to constitute the structure of collectivist societies, as contrasted with individualistic Western societies.

In the view of the Mediterraneanists, the honor of women, however, is construed differently. A woman's honor is passive and dependent on the men with whom she is connected. According to the Mediterraneanists, a daughter or wife's honor is defined in the sexual sphere and conditioned on her ability and the males of the household to which she belongs (father's or husband's) to protect her sexual purity, which is defined in terms of her virginity or marital faithfulness.<sup>82</sup> If the reputation of a woman's sexual purity is sullied, then her household suffers shame.

Of course, these views could be nuanced, but what is critical to note here is the influence these anthropologists exhibited over Bruce Malina and John Elliot's works in the late 1970s and especially early 1980s. Malina's *The New Testament World: Insights from*

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not seem to emphasize the concept of the limited currency of honor. Second, the concept of conservative as we have defined it most closely resembles literary approach biblical authors take with regard to the exchange of honor when between two parties (Hannah and her rival, David and Saul, Eli and Zadok, etc.). Similar to the Context Group, our "conservative" view of honor or shame is binary in nature and is rooted in an agonistic concept of societal interactions where there are "losers" and "winners" in any public contest in which societal position and esteem are at stake.

<sup>82</sup> One of the early attempts that reflect on how these values operated in the Bible was Julian Pitt-Rivers. J. A. Pitt-Rivers, *Fate of Shechem*, 135–171. Also see Rivers' "Honour and Social Status," in *Peristiany*, 68–69. For another example, see Abou A. M. Zied's comments about the Bedouin. A. A. M. Zied, "Honour and Shame among the Bedouins of Egypt," in *Peristiany*, 256.

*Cultural Anthropology* and Elliott's *Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter* spawned a new methodological direction in biblical studies. A series of seminars<sup>83</sup> and sessions at the Society of Biblical Literature coalesced in a large number of works that aimed at placing the Bible in its total social context.<sup>84</sup> Elliott, with a group of scholars,<sup>85</sup> organized the Context Group in 1986<sup>86</sup> that was dedicated to further sociological methodologies that were emerging in New Testament scholarship as a whole.

Members of the Context Group, following the lead of Malina and Elliott, hold that the Bible has been misread on many occasions because historical-critical methods often work from Western assumptions, and by setting the Bible in its total social context, we might understand it the way ancient Mediterraneans did. Thus, the group shares a common set of tenets that they express by way of contrast with modern Western

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<sup>83</sup> In 1986 the founding members met in the *Social Facets Seminar* that was chaired by John Eliot. In 1994 *Semeia* 68 was dedicated to the study of shame and honor. The issue contained several studies on specific topics New and Old Testament, as well as the theoretical use of the social sciences in biblical studies.

<sup>84</sup> In New Testament scholarship see D. A. De Silva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981). K. C. Hanson and D. E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998). B. J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1981). J. H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998). J. J. Pilch, ed., *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible* (Biblical Interpretation Series 53; Leiden: Brill, 2001). P. F. Esler, ed., *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006). G. F. Downing, "'Honor' among Exegetes," *CBQ* 61, no. 1 (1999): 53–57. T. Frymer-Kensky, "Tit for Tat: The Principle of Equal Retribution in Near Eastern and Biblical Law," *BA* 43, no. 4 (1980): 230–234. L. G. Herr, "Retribution and Personal Honor." T. R. Hobbs, "Reflections on Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations." *JBL* 116, no. 3 (1997): 501–3.

<sup>85</sup> John Elliott's *What is Social-Scientific Criticism of the Bible?* coined a new term for the group's methodology and provided an essential bibliographic survey. J. H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

Other key figures who published on the subject during this era (all of whom eventually became part of the Context Group) include Dennis Duling, Philip Esler, Douglas E. Oakman, Jerome Neyrey SJ, John J. Pilch, Richard L. Rohrbaugh, and Wolfgang Stegemann.

<sup>86</sup> At that time, the Context Group (called "The Social Facets Seminar") met with the Jesus Seminar, but later broke away in 1989. See J. H. Elliott, "On Wooing Crocodiles for Fun and Profit: Confessions of an Intact Admirer," in *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honor of Bruce J. Malina* (eds. B. J. Malina, John J. Pilch, and the Context Group; Biblical Interpretation Series 53; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 15.

societies. While the modern Western world is an industrial and individualistic society, the ancient Mediterranean cultures were agrarian and collectivist societies.<sup>87</sup> As a result, society is structured around patron-client relationships. Men of lower status and wealth can by agreement enter into a mutually obligating relationship with men of higher status and wealth. Western societies have tended to devalue honor and shame, while Mediterranean societies exhibit a pre-occupation for attaining honor and avoiding shame. Thus, Malina and those who follow him call honor and shame “pivotal values”<sup>88</sup> of Mediterranean societies.

As Kevin C. Hanson states, “Honor is not simple self-esteem or pride; it is a status-claim which is affirmed by the community. It is tied to the symbols of power, sexual status, gender, and religion. Consequently, it is a social, rather than a psychological, value.”<sup>89</sup> Moreover, honor is seen as a limited quantity and there are two types: ascribed and acquired.<sup>90</sup> Ascribed honor is the social standing tied to the status of one’s family or group, while acquired honor is the status one might get through accomplishments.

Conversely, “shame” is either a “sensitivity towards one’s reputation” (e.g., a

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<sup>87</sup> By “agrarian,” these scholars do not mean that the ancients were mere agriculturalists, as modern farmers in the United States are likely to share many of the same cultural assumptions as urban dwellers. “In our usage, then, the term “agrarian” has a meaning much closer to “pre-industrial” than to the term “agricultural.” B. J. Malina and R. L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 2–3. By collectivist, these scholars usually mean an individual’s identity and honor were tied to that of the groups to which they were born. Identity, then, is primary a group-based societal construct instead of an individually based construct.

<sup>88</sup> Gilmore refers to honor and shame a “master symbol.” D. D. Gilmore, “Introduction: The Shame of Dishonor,” in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington D. C.: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 17.

<sup>89</sup> K. C. Hanson, “How Honorable! How Shameful! A Cultural Analysis Of Matthew’s Makarisms And Reproaches,” *Semeia* 68 (1994): 83.

<sup>90</sup> While honor can be won or lost in a number of ways, the Context Group tends to emphasize the importance of challenge-riposte interactions. For example, see B. Malina, *New Testament World*, 30–33; Bourdieu: 215; K. C. Hanson, 84.

shameless person) or “refers to the loss of status: humiliation.”<sup>91</sup> And because higher status is greatly desirable and in limited quantity, groups are always vying for it; hence society is characterized as agonistic. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that Malina and the Context Group construes Mediterranean society as a high context culture and anti-introspective.<sup>92</sup>

Other scholars have taken this approach to Mediterranean society and sought to apply it the Hebrew Bible. One notable example is Timothy Laniak’s *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*, which we choose for several reasons. First, his work provides a representative example that applies many of the anthropological insights of the Context Group. Second, Laniak employs a socio-literary treatment<sup>93</sup> of Esther’s structure and themes. By doing so, Laniak attempted to establish the thematic centrality of honor and shame to the book in order to reveal the concerns of the post-exilic community that produced the book.<sup>94</sup> In addition to the many details that illustrate the importance of honor and shame in Esther, Laniak identifies two “plot patterns” that underscore the fundamental importance of these values in the story. The first is the “sin-alienation-reconciliation” pattern,<sup>95</sup> a common prophetic motif that has the goal of restoring God’s

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<sup>91</sup> K. C. Hanson, 83.

<sup>92</sup> Commenting on texts produced in high context cultures, Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, “In this way the Bible, like most texts written in the high-context Mediterranean world, presumes that readers have a broad and adequate knowledge of its social context. It offers little by way of extended explanation. B. Malina and R. L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 12.

<sup>93</sup> While we will not cover deSilva’s work in New Testament literature, it is worth noting that Laniak employs his dialectical approach.

<sup>94</sup> T. Laniak. *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther* (SBLDS 165; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

people to their “original state of grace/favor with both God and community.”<sup>96</sup> Laniak understands this pattern as a guilt-based shame.

The second type of structure follows the pattern favor-crisis-abandonment-reversal-new status;<sup>97</sup> and it is employed in laments, for example. It represents a challenge to a person or people’s honor that is a “crisis of suffering and shame ‘without cause.’”<sup>98</sup> After the enemy’s successful attack, God, Israel’s divine patron, intervenes and rescues their status.<sup>99</sup> As a result, the post-exilic community goes from “*lower-than-before* to *higher-than-before*” [italics his].<sup>100</sup> We believe that his discussion throughout Esther is generally valuable in helping the reader to become more aware of the social values that the Jewish community who produced the book embraced. Despite the well-placed methodological criticisms Karen Jobes levies against Laniak,<sup>101</sup> we believe his methodology can offer promise if the complex semantics honor and shame are mapped

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid 10.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 8–9.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 13–15. See Laniak’s description of this theme as it carries out in several biblical examples in the psalms, Nehemiah, Daniel, etc.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>101</sup> Karen Jobes, review of T. S. Laniak, *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*, RBL (2000), n. p. Cited 28 February, 2013. Online: [http://bookreviews.org/pdf/67\\_366.pdf](http://bookreviews.org/pdf/67_366.pdf). Jobes believes that Laniak has helpfully noted that Esther must be understood in the socio-historical setting in which the post-exilic Jewish community found itself. Nonetheless, Jobes believes that Laniak’s work suffers several deficiencies. First, it is difficult to acquire sufficient background knowledge of Persian era social codes that governed the community. Second, attempts to build cross-cultural connections, analogies, say between the post-exilic Jewish community and Bedouins, may be too general. Thirdly, he attempts to use the four semantic domains of *kbd*, which Laniak identifies as the main word that denotes honor, as a lens through which to view Jewish society in Esther. Fourth, he assumes a binary relationship between honor and shame terms, while none of the antonyms of *kbd* appears in the book, a criticism that we share. Fifth, because of our dearth of knowledge of Persian society and the generalizations Laniak was forced to make on comparative data, the usefulness of the methodology is questionable when providing insights into the text. Our short rejoinder to Jobes is that in much of the Hebrew Bible, as we will show in our second chapter, there are several opposing concepts of honor and shame that operate as binary opposites, as long as one does not compare the wrong lexica (e.g., כבוד with בוש, instead of כבוד with קלל). For further critique of Laniak’s linguistic, social and literary analysis of Esther, see L. J. Lawrence, *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew: A Critical Assessment of the Use of the Honour and Shame Model in New Testament Studies* (WUNT 165; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 16–17.

out in the Hebrew Bible more carefully, so that they can be applied to the structure of diverse literatures in the Bible. It is on this front that we would like to add a contribution by outlining how the concepts of honor and shame are lexically represented and influence the social values imbedded in the Deuteronomistic presentation of the Davidic covenant, including its interpretation.<sup>102</sup> After establishing the various semantic domains of honor and shame in Chapter 2, we show for example how the Deuteronomistic depiction of David and Saul and the formulation of the Davidic Covenant centrally involve honor and shame.

With regard to this study, the chief value in Laniak's honor-shame socio-literary approach is that it offers a way of testing whether or not honor and shame were central to the self-perceived identity of the Israelite community, as enmeshed in the very structures of their stories, as opposed to being merely contained within various details of the content of a particular story.<sup>103</sup>

As far as we can tell, Gary Stansell's article, "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives," is the only attempt to apply the Context Group's approach to social

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<sup>102</sup> We agree with Jobes that Laniak's discussion of honor and shame are sparse and unable to undergird his larger structural model. For example, he claims כבוד is the primary word for "honor" in the Hebrew Bible, yet none of the "shame" words he mentions (e.g., נאץ, שרץ, בוץ, נבל, שפל, חפר, חרף, קלה, חרף, חפר, שפל, נבל, בוץ, שרץ, נאץ, שמים) appears in Esther. How can he then present a model of honor and shame? Ibid, 23. Interestingly, he omits קלל, which actually is an antonym of כבוד.

<sup>103</sup> For his part, Laniak points out that the two patterns he identifies closely resemble the Deuteronomistic sin-repentance-restoration cycle. If further study bears out the relationship, as we think it might, then much more biblical literature could be said to revolve around honor and shame. Lastly, one can see the Laniak's second pattern as prominent in Daniel and the Joseph narratives. For discussion on the possible literary dependencies in these stories, see Moshe Gan, "Megillat 'Esther Be'aspaqlariyat Qorot Yoseph Be'misrayim" (Hebrew) *Tarbiz* 31 (1961-62): 144-49; and Ludwig A. Rosenthal, "Die Josephgeschichte, mit den Buechern Ester und Daniel verglichen," *ZAW* 15 (1895): 278-84. It should be noted that if the kernel of the Joseph cycle find its origins in a period far preceding the production of Esther and Daniel, one can see that honor and shame were not only constant concerns of the pre-exilic and post-exilic communities, but were also understood in much the same ways and embedded in their respective communities' identities. In this way, honor and shame were no cultural invention at a later date, but an abiding part of Israel from the pre- to post-exilic period.



relations in the story of David. By analyzing a group of six sample of texts,<sup>104</sup> Stansell attempts to demonstrate that events in David's story fit into many of the social-world of the Mediterranean,<sup>105</sup> namely the "challenge-response pattern, revenge for insults, mediation between disputing parties, family solidarity, and the honor of the male bound up in the sexual purity of the female."<sup>106</sup> While we will comment on his specific claims in our own analysis of the Davidic narratives in chapter 4, we should point out here, that it is a bit curious that Stansell completely excludes David's ultimate honor in 2 Samuel 7, which seems to provide one of the key themes of the Deuteronomistic History, despite the fact that many of the passages he cites are designed to foreshadow the gift of the Davidic covenant.<sup>107</sup>

Like Laniak, Ken Stone's *Sex, Honor and Power in the Deuteronomistic History*<sup>108</sup> is another attempt to use a socio-literary approach to biblical narrative, though using Mieke Bal's narratological methodology. Stone argues that certain narratives in the Deuteronomistic History "are structured in relationship to cultural assumptions about sexual activity that involves the quest by males for public honor, power, and prestige."<sup>109</sup> By utilizing Bal's approach to reading literary texts, which he believes is

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<sup>104</sup> He reviews 1 Sam 18:23 (Saul's gift of his daughter to David); 1 Sam 20:30–34 (Jonathan's "shameful" protection of David at the feast); 1 Sam 25 (Nabal-Abigail narrative); 2 Sam 6:16, 20–23 (Michal's final dishonor); 2 Sam 10:1–6a; 19:1–9abαβ (David's men are dishonored); 2 Sam 13:1–33; 16:20–23 (shame in the family).

<sup>105</sup> G. Stansell, 54.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> In fact, from the standpoint of challenge-riposte, if the Deuteronomist's inclusion of the History of David's Rise (HDR) attempts, among other things, to defend the honor of Davidides from challengers, then the HDR becomes a type of riposte to those who would discredit the Davidide's legitimacy.

<sup>108</sup> K. Stone, *Sex, Honor and Power in the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 234; Sheffield, Eng.: JSOT Press, 1996).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 11.

more sensitive to the semiotic of power in narratives, Stone attempts to uncover the network of possible social meanings that will operate as imperfect informants for the modern scholar regarding Israelite assumptions of sexuality and honor held by those who produced the biblical text.<sup>110</sup> Though cautious, Stone relies quite heavily on the results of anthropology.<sup>111</sup> One particular focus for Stone is how the power and prestige of men utilized women to extend their power through them.<sup>112</sup> Such concepts show a conscious reliance on anthropologists such as Lévi-Strauss, Gayle Rubin,<sup>113</sup> Mauss,<sup>114</sup> and Gilmore. Even if we cannot reconstruct the history of Israel, we can still uncover the mentalities present in the biblical text and reconstruct the beliefs of those who gave us these stories.<sup>115</sup>

Lastly, it is worth briefly mentioning the attempts to integrate anthropological approaches, especially those of the Context Group, that have filtered down to quasi-technical literature.<sup>116</sup> Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin's *Social World of Ancient Israel 1250-587 BCE* is one such work, which we previously mentioned. While Matthews,

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 29 and 35. Stone also notes, "...it has been insufficiently noted that the very structures of the texts are in part the result of a social or symbolic world which these texts presuppose." Ibid, 25.

<sup>111</sup> Especially helpful is the review in J. Stiebert 62–66.

<sup>112</sup> For example, we merely note that pages 42–48 which set the tone of the work concern this topic.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 19, n. 10.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>116</sup> It is a well documented, thoroughly informed and methodologically aware, but it is also accessible to advanced laymen and does not require the facility of Hebrew or anthropology. More accurately, this work and the ones that follow are often used to train undergraduates and seminary students. Some examples include: V. H. Matthews and J. C. Moyer, *The Old Testament: Text and Context*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997. V. H. Matthews, *Manners and Customs in the Bible*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988; *Studying the Ancient Israelites: A Guide to Sources and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Nottingham, England: Baker Academic: Apollos, 2007).

for example, has contributed to the Semeia volume produced by the Context Group,<sup>117</sup> the work outlining the social structures and institutions of Iron Age Israel is the culmination of much of anthropological work that has come before. And a number of works like Laniak's that treat individual biblical books or parts of them from the standpoint of honor and shame have arisen,<sup>118</sup> along with a more popular, biblicist work, *NIV Archaeological Study Bible*, which aims to illuminate the history and culture of the books of the Bible.<sup>119</sup> It would be very difficult to overestimate the effect that the Mediterraneanists and Context Group have had on biblical studies in the past three decades and will continue to have for some time to come.

Nonetheless, while the influence of the Mediterraneanists and Context Group has been great, there has also been a growing number of voices in anthropology and among sociologically minded biblical scholars that have argued against the concept of single cultural Mediterranean entity that is defined by the honor and shame complex.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> As one example, Matthews and Benjamin follow Malina's concept of a limited and a non-renewable world, a group oriented, agrarian society, and the centrality of honor and shame to the ancient Mediterranean region. Despite their statements in *Semeia* that "is a fundamental characteristic of all Mediterranean cultures, including those where ancient Israel and early Christianity took root." V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin, "Social Sciences and Biblical Studies," *Semeia* 68 (1996): 7. Despite such a statement and as far as we could tell, very few pages of *Social World* are dedicated to the concepts of honor and shame.

<sup>118</sup> Among the landslide of articles and books, some of which will be canvassed in this work, we note several: D. Bergant, "'My Beloved is Mine and I Am His, (Song 2.16): The Song of Songs and Honor and Shame," *Semeia* 68 (1996): 23–40. P. J. Botha, "Isaiah 37.21–35: Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem as a Challenge to the Honour of Yahweh," *OTE* 13 (2000): 269–82; C. V. Camp, "Understanding a Patriarchy: Women in Second Century Jerusalem through the Eyes of Ben Sira", in *"Women Like This": New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World* (Early Judaism and Its Literature 1; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1991), 1–39. M. T. Finney, *Honour and Conflict in the Ancient World: 1 Corinthians in Its Greco-Roman Social Setting* (Library of New Testament Studies 460; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2012); and D. A. DeSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (SBLDS 152. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1995). M. S. Odell, "The Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16:59–63," *JSOT* 56 (1992): 101–12. R. A. Simkins, "'Return to Yahweh': Honor and Shame in Joel," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 41–54.

<sup>119</sup> W. Kaiser, ed., *NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk through Biblical History and Culture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

<sup>120</sup> For examples, see J. Fernandez, "Consciousness and Class in Southern Spain," *Am Ethnol* 10 (1983): 165–172; "Reply to Douglass," *Am Ethnol* 10:188–189; "Fieldwork in Southwestern Europe," *Crit*

Usually these scholars also argue against a binary concept of honor and shame, claiming that “honor” as a generalized and catchall creates a reductionism when applied across cultures to describe social valuations in different societal structures (e.g. economic, sexual, etc.). Scholars like Michael Herzfeld, aver, “It is rather in ethnographic particularism that we should seek, without any sense of paradox, those theoretical insights which the reductionist generalisation of glossing can never yield.”<sup>121</sup> And it is not that Herzfeld denies cultural intermingling of the Mediterranean region,<sup>122</sup> but he protests that the methodology of the Mediterraneanists “presupposes that there exists within the circum-Mediterranean region something which is both worthy of cross-cultural examination and yet somehow 'less' characteristic of other areas.”<sup>123</sup> He believes, to be sure, that honor and shame are significant to many cultures in circum-Mediterranean region; but each culture must be particularly studied in its native lexical environment without the superimposition of models and generalized terminology to understand.<sup>124</sup>

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*Anth* 7, no. 1 (1987): 83–85; C. Giordano, “Between Theoretical Discourse and Empirical Fictions,” *Crit Anth* 7, no. 2 (1987): 83–88; M. Herzfeld, “Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems,” *Man* 15, no. 2 (1980): 339–51; “Gender Pragmatics: Agency, Speech, and Bride-Theft in a Cretan Mountain Village,” *Anthropology* 9:1–2 (1985): 25–44. “The Horns of the Mediterraneanist Dilemma,” *Am Ethnol* 11, no. 3 (1984): 439–54; “View from Too Far Away,” *Crit Anth* 7, no. 1 (1987): 85–87. J. Llobera, “Fieldwork in Southwestern Europe: Anthropological Panacea or Epistemological Straitjacket,” *Crit Anth* 6, no. 2 (1986): 25–33; “Reply to Critics: The Anthropology of Southwestern Europe: The Way Forward,” *Crit Anth* 7, no. 2 (1987): 101–18. O. Pi-Sunyer, “Anthropological Panacea or Epistemological Straitjacket?” *Crit Anth* 7, no. 1 (1987): 96–99. Even among Mediterraneanists, there has been some debate about how to define the “Mediterranean.” Some scholars have seen it as a geographical entity (e.g., Davis; Boissevain; Becket), while others like Braudel does not see the geographical unity as more important than the cultural unity. J. Boissevain, “Towards a Social Anthropology of the Mediterranean,” *Curr Anth* 20 (1979): 81–93; J. Davis, *The People of the Mediterranean: An Essay in Comparative Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 10–13; J. Becket, “CA Comment,” *Curr Anth* 20 (1979): 85–86.

<sup>121</sup> M. Herzfeld, *Honour and Shame*, 349.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 339.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 339–40.

<sup>124</sup> Herzfeld states, “To date, little effort has been directed towards the comparison of usages within each linguistic tradition, or towards a critical appraisal of the assumption that indigenous terms mean much the same thing wherever they occur. Yet without a series of such internal perspectives, the

More recently, Jael Avrahami has followed Herzfeld and has sought to study בוש in a more restricted sense in the Hebrew Bible without recourse to general Semitic philology and restricted by how it occurs in isolated word pairs in poetry. While we will fully address Avrahami's views and methodology in our second chapter, it is important to note that she seeks not only to challenge the tradition view that בוש means "shame," choosing rather to understand it as "disappointed," but also believes that her results challenge the Mediterraneanists belief that honor and shame should be viewed as binary opposites.

Before moving from lexical works that relate to honor and shame, we should briefly mention Walter Kim's unpublished Harvard dissertation entitled, *The Language of Verbal Insults in the Hebrew Bible*.<sup>125</sup> For Kim, insults are used to shame both subjectively and objectively (our emotive and positional).<sup>126</sup> Insults are a part of a verbal struggle that seeks to ridicule a person publicly for the purpose of undermining or reasserting social hierarchical structures.<sup>127</sup> He employs a four-fold categorization to classify insults: as a form of shaming, as means of combat, as way of ridicule, and as expression of contempt.<sup>128</sup> For Kim, these categories are not mutually exclusive, but are meant to explicate the various objective and subjective purposes of insults.

Agreeing with the criticisms of Michael Herzfeld, Joanna Stiebert and others (see below), Kim criticizes the Mediterraneanists for their lack of sensitivity regarding the

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cross-cultural comparison of concepts to which our only effective access is through local usage makes little sense." Ibid, 339.

<sup>125</sup> W. Kim, *The Language of Verbal Insults in the Hebrew Bible* (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 2007).

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 20. Most of his second chapter is dedicated to the various ways in which various idioms and lexica express shame and shaming.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 1 and 19–20.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 19.

various manifestations of honor and shame in various Mediterranean cultures.

Admitting that it is easy to be reductionist and easy to fail to distinguish between a culture and the values portrayed in its text, he still believes that texts reveal a culture's symbolic world and mores and, in this case, the social ideology of the ancient biblical writers.<sup>129</sup> And to this extent, our approach also agrees with Kim's. From what we can ascertain, however, Kim seems free to cite modern social and linguistic theorists freely to give theoretical backing to his approach to shame.<sup>130</sup> He acknowledges the dangers of importing the concepts of insults from other cultures and the use of theoretical social models.<sup>131</sup> But he believes there is a middle ground between "parallelomania" and "solipsism."<sup>132</sup> Kim proposes that we can make "structural comparisons that introduce appropriately analogous words, phrases, and situations to elucidate the meaning of Biblical insults."<sup>133</sup> Thus, like Laniak, Kim utilizes the technique of close reading and structural comparison to establish cultural links. We will have opportunity in our lexical chapter to comment on some of his specific results.

In Joanna Stiebert's valuable monograph, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution*, the author attempts to understand shame from both a

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 6–7.

<sup>130</sup> For example, one of the main theoretical components of his approach reflects J. L. Austin's Speech-Act Theory. That is to say language not only describes reality, but it creates that reality. In the case of shaming, an insult is meant to describe the shamefulness of a person, but also to shame them. See, J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975. In other examples, when speaking about the agonistic nature of insults, he cites Bianca Beersma, Fieke Harinck, and Maria Gerts, "Bound in Honor: How Honor Values and Insults Affect the Experience and Management of Conflicts," *IJCM* 14, no. 2 (2003): 86–87; or Walter F. Edwards, "Speech Acts in Guyana: Communicating Ritual Insult," in *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 297–353.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 11–12.

<sup>132</sup> W. Kim, 11.

<sup>133</sup> He cites the approach of Shemaryahu Talmon. S. Talmon, "The 'Comparative Method in Biblical Interpretation-Principles and Problems,'" in *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Edited by F. Greenspahn; New York: New York University Press, 1991), 381–419.

psychological and anthropological perspectives in the Major Prophets, while taking exception with a more Mediterraneanist approach.<sup>134</sup> With regard to a psychological approach, she follows Cairns in rejecting a clean distinction between the emotions of shame and guilt. While both emotions are understood as one's negative self-assessment, they are conceptualized as "what a terrible person I am" versus "what a terrible thing I've done," respectively.<sup>135</sup> As in Goffman's thought, shame is tied more closely to the idea that one's perception carries a stigma and, thus, is more connected also to sources of societal power.<sup>136</sup>

Stiebert's work, however, seems more of an assessment of certain aspects of the Mediterraneanist model than an attempt to break new ground in its own right. For example, in her assessment of Isaiah, she notes the prominence of humility as a high ideal (e.g., the suffering servant), a lack of challenge-riposte interactions, and that honor is only proper for YHWH to possess. Thus, no human honor-shame system resembling that defined by the Context Group appears in the book. She does find subjective and objective aspects to honor and shame (again our emotive and positional aspects), and her discussion of YHWH's shame is a valuable addition to that started by Huber in her dissertation.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Despite the great amount of detailed attention she pays to shame in the social sciences, which is valuable in its own right, she is so cautious of applying any modern models to the ancient world (and wisely so), that there is little attempt to employ the results of her first chapters to her actual study. It leads one to the understanding that these early chapters are nearly useless to the rest of the book. See her discussion, for example, on pages 110ff. The problem with her study is that she so excoriates the Mediterraneanists for importing anthropological material that when she does apply psychological material, one wonders why she does it and upon what basis she can now assume a universal human experience to do so. For example, see her use of Scheff's research on conformity when discussing the purpose of shame in Jeremiah 2. J. Stiebert, 118.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 8. See D. L. Cairns, *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 24.

<sup>136</sup> J. Stiebert, 11–12.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 96–98.

In Stiebert's discussion of the dearth of challenge-riposte elements in Isaiah, she admits, though, that "the Hebrew prophets do not attribute sacredness to the various systems of differences that constitutes a culture's kinship and division-of-labour structures, because Y[HWH] obliterates preference, goes some way towards explaining this 'absence.'"<sup>138</sup> In our view, the focus on YHWH's honor cannot be over-emphasized in the mind of the Isaianic writers and editors,<sup>139</sup> not only with regard to lack of challenge-riposte passages, but also the lack of focus on human honor systems. One cannot conclude that the Bible lacks a "Mediterraneanist" view of honor if human-to-human relationships are not the focus of the text. What is more, the overwhelming centrality of YHWH's honor exposes the greatest weakness of Stiebert's work. If YHWH's honor is so central to the book and his relationship with Israel is at issue at all, then she needed to speak about covenant.

Oddly she waits until her chapter on Jeremiah to outline her post-structuralist reading methodology.<sup>140</sup> What emerges from Steibert's analysis of Jeremiaiah 2, where we find a sexualized discourse on shame, is an "anti-foreign" ideology that reflects an attempt to legitimize the power of those returning from exile, especially over those groups who had been living in the so-called empty land.<sup>141</sup> Without doubting an anti-foreign voice in the prophets, we would note that such an assumption hardly depends

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 89. She goes on to quote Schneidau on the same page: "Before [Yhwh], all men and their petty distinctions are as the undifferentiated dust of the desert." H. N. Schneidau, *Sacred Discontent* (The Bible and Western Tradition; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 10.

<sup>139</sup> No matter how many Isaiahs we posit to have written and edited the entire book, none seem to soften the rather strong statement of YHWH's honor in Isaiah 6:3.

<sup>140</sup> She cites Bourdieu. Stiebert, 114, n. 7. P. Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. Oddly, she can reject the results of modern Mediterraneanists' approach, yet uses the results of modern anthropology to approach Jeremiah.

<sup>141</sup> Following Carroll, she rejects the claims of the text that the land was empty. Also, see her use of Carroll, seeing the multi-layered text as way of erecting an exclusivist relationship between those who have lived in the land and those who are returning. R. P. Carroll, "The Myth of the Empty Land," *Semeia* 59 (1992): 79-93.



on post-structuralist methodology in particular. We believe that it might have been more helpful for her to be more concerned about how the editors of Jeremiah conceptualized shame as opposed to how such a conceptualization is used. One also wonders why such an analysis would not also be applied to Third Isaiah.

In the end, Stiebert also rejects the claim that the honor-shame dichotomy can demarcate the Mediterranean region.<sup>142</sup> Following Herzfeld, she also holds that "'honour' and 'shame' have been used to label such a wide range of local-social, sexual, economic and other standards, they have both become no more than 'inefficient glosses.'"<sup>143</sup> Moreover, the universality of the honor-shame complex in Mediterranean societies is also "illusory," for which judgment she notes the example of adulterous women in Wikan's study of a small urban community in Cairo.<sup>144</sup>

In sum, while her book is insightful, it is hard to see how her methodology helps her to do anything more than criticize the Mediterranean model of honor and shame. Her absolute rejection of the Mediterraneanist model, however, seems tenable, if one can accept her limited lexical method and limited attention to the actors involved in the prophetic discourse (namely YHWH and Israel!). The weakness of her approach is that she only pursues traditional honor-shame vocabulary and does not study how honor and shame are represented in a wider way (e.g., high and low semantic domain). Such a problem is ironic, given her affirmation of Herzfeld's call to study the ways in which honor and shame are represented in a particular culture. If she had done more than just acknowledge that other representation of honor and shame exist, perhaps her results could have been more nuanced in her estimation of the Mediterraneanist approach.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 19. See U. Wikan, "Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair," *Man* 19 (1984): 635–52.

W. R. Domeris' article on honor and shame in Proverbs<sup>145</sup> also takes exception with the Mediterraneanist methodology, preferring Herzfeld's particularist approach to the indigenous lexicon of social values of a culture.<sup>146</sup> In short the purpose of Domeris' study is to show how Proverbs provides a good test case to demonstrate the methodological dangers of applying the generalized concepts of the "Mediterranean personality" to the Hebrew Bible.<sup>147</sup> In fact, according to Domeris, studies of honor or shame should only be applied to books or even the parts of biblical books.<sup>148</sup> In any event, Domeris takes aim at the bifurcated gender roles that scholars like Giovanni describe. For example, while men's lives took place in the public sphere, women's lives were in the home.<sup>149</sup> Women tend toward sexual wantonness, it was to a man's honor to guard closely her chastity, be it her father or husband.<sup>150</sup>

For Domeris, the danger is not so much in the Mediterraneanists' assertions about the modern Mediterranean, but in their failure to take into account the social-moral impact of Christianity and Islam on sexual mores over the centuries.<sup>151</sup> For this reason, he believes Proverbs provides a good case study. He notes that, "Even such a brief survey of shame in Proverbs enables one to see that the category of the shame of a wife is a minor one and that the whole understanding of shame was far less sexually

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<sup>145</sup> W. R. Domeris, "Shame and Honour in Proverbs: Wise women and foolish men" *OTE* 8 (1995): 86–102.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, 89.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, 91.

<sup>149</sup> See M. J. Giovannini, "Woman: A Dominant Symbol within the Cultural System of a Sicilian Town," *Man* 16 (1981): 413–16.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid* 411.

<sup>151</sup> W. R. Domeris, 91–93. It seems to me that Campbell is quite aware of this fact among the Sarakatsani, as we have noted above.

oriented than in the studies of the modern Mediterranean culture.”<sup>152</sup> There is no command to guard women against promiscuity; and with regard to honor, there is an assertion of humility over honor, a concept foreign to the Mediterraneanist approach. One valuable insight is that the opposite of honor is death and destruction.<sup>153</sup> We believe that this insight is also key to many concepts of shame. But perhaps most telling is the public, honorable role women take in the book (e.g. Prov 31). His sober attention to detail is shows the dangers of reading anthropological models semi-critically into the biblical text.

Amy Cottrill’s *Language, Power, and Identity in the Lament Psalms of the Individual* utilizes another discourse methodology to understand individual laments. She sees narratives<sup>154</sup> as a “deep structure of a cultural world, or connecting story taken for granted by participants.”<sup>155</sup> She states, “The goal of this work is to describe the discursive identity created for the ‘I’<sup>156</sup> in the laments of the individual.”<sup>157</sup> Cottrill’s is careful not to understand the context of the self as an ahistorical entity, but one whose

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid 96.

<sup>154</sup> She is interest in psalms that have a plot structure. A. Cottrill, 10.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 4. She later uses Dorothy Holland and others’ theory of a “figured-world” or “narrativized world” to further define the relationship between identity-making and narrative. See D. C. Holland, *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998). “A figured world [is]...the location in which an individual learns to tell a specific story about her life.” A. Cottrill, 20. It is this patterned world of expression in narrative form that shape to the individual’s experience, and communal “solidarity is achieved in a patterned storyline.” A. Cottrill, 21.

<sup>156</sup> She abandons Gunkel’s view of the “idealized individual poet” who spoke “heart to heart,” spontaneously out of need. She also avoids Mowinckel’s view that the “I” was the voice of the king. See A. Cottrill, 13–16. She follows Gerstenberger’s view that “the identity of the ‘I’ was historically unlimited, a universal individual. A. Cottrill, 17–18. Also see the nation below concerning her view of cult.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 1. It should be noted that Cottrill does not treat lament psalms outside of the psalter like 1 Samuel 2:1–10. Had she discussed texts like 1 Samuel 2 and laments that appeared, she could have explored how such texts could function in larger communal sense, which is the part of the “discourse” missing from the psalter itself.

expression has been formed within a particular historical and linguistic milieu.<sup>158</sup> Thus, she also agrees that the ancient Near Eastern self that is exhibited in the Hebrew Bible was fashioned in culture distinct from that of modern Western society.<sup>159</sup> While she accepts Gerstenberger's distinction of individual-private versus communal-public psalms,<sup>160</sup> she also believes that Carr's view that the psalms could have had a didactic purpose.<sup>161</sup> In short, her goal is to understand the embedded plot structure<sup>162</sup> in the narrative presented by the "I" in the individual lament psalms as a conditioned that reveals the speaker's ideological assumptions.

While there is little need to review Cottrill's whole work here, her fourth chapter is most worth noting for our cause. It is where she develops the identity and agency in the relationship between the psalmist and God. Regarding the structure of societal relations, Cottrill following Eisenstadt and Roniger, Liverani, Hobbs, and Simkins<sup>163</sup> by

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<sup>158</sup> A. Cottrill, 2.

<sup>159</sup> She follows Robert Di Vito's understanding of the personal identify in the Bible: "(1) embedded culturally; (2) has 'comparatively decentered and undefined' personal boundaries; (3) lacks inner depth, but is 'relatively transparent, socialized, and embodied'; and has identity because of, not in spite of, obedience to relationship of dependence on other people." R.A. Di Vito, "Old testament Anthropology and the Construcion o the Personal Identify," *CBQ* 61 (1999): 221. Interestingly, here she does not seem to rely or refer on any of the scholars in the Context Group.

<sup>160</sup> A. Cottrill, 6. See E. Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 33. The individual psalms were used in public in the temple to address the needs of individuals, and did not address the concerns of the official cult. According to Gerstenberger, however, is "not between cultic or non-cultic psalms, but between public and private or official and local psalms." A. Cottrill, 17. See Buss's view of cult. M. Buss, "The Meaning of 'Cult' and the Interpretation of the Old Testament," *JBR* 32 (1964): 321.

<sup>161</sup> A. Cottrill, 9–10. See D. M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>162</sup> Two examples of these elements are: "The individual is a loyal servant of God and has lived according to God's expectations," and "The individual is debilitated and suffering, which is often described in physical terms." For a fuller list, see A. Cottrill, 22.

<sup>163</sup> See S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, "Patron-Client Relations as Model of Structuring social Exchange," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980), 42–77; T. R. Hobbs, "Reflections on Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations," *JBL* 116 (1997), 502. M. Liverani, "Prestige and Interest: International Relations in Ideologies in the Amarna Letters," *Ber* 31 (1983): 41–56. N. P. Lemche, "Kings and Clients: On Loyalty between the Ruler and the Ruled in Ancient 'Israel,'" in *Ethics and Politics in the*

rejecting the suzerain-vassal model and opting the patron-client model for loyalty relationships,<sup>164</sup> despite the fact that Hebrew lacks vocabulary for “client” and “patron.”<sup>165</sup> The former, she avers, is based on a model of kingship, as opposed to domestic relations.<sup>166</sup> Her treatment of the divine-human relationship is superficial, despite having understood the importance of the speaker’s historical context. She never shows how Israelite or ancient Near Eastern covenants may impact the speaker’s understanding of what to expect from YHWH. Surely, Israelite covenants could have provided some understanding of the divine-human relationship in her social model, whether it is based on a sovereign-vassal model or not. This is presumably because “the concept of covenant is not prevalent” in the lament psalms.<sup>167</sup> But it does little good to argue that the social model behind the psalms is a patron-client model, despite the fact that these terms do not exist in Hebrew and argue that covenant can be ignored because the word בְּרִית is not explicitly mentioned. Thus, if she believes that covenant is separate from divine-human social structure envisioned by the authors of the individual psalms, she should have provided a rationale for how covenant could have become completely divorced from the Israelite self-identity. Does our chief witness to the Israelite ideology regarding the divine-human relationship have absolutely no bearing

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*Hebrew Bible* (ed. D. A. Knight; Semeia 66; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995): 119–32. R. A. Simkins, “Patronage and the Political Economy of Monarchic Israel,” *Semeia* 87 (1999): 134. A. Cottrill, 66–67.

<sup>164</sup> She states, however, “The question is, therefore, not whether or not ancient Israel was a patron/client culture, but how that relational structure elucidates the laments’ language particularly with regard to the psalmist/god interaction.” A. Cottrill, 107.

<sup>165</sup> A. Cottrill, 104–5. J. K. Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 259.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid*, 102, 106–107

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

on the understanding on a work centered on the subject? It seems to us that a more persuasive argument is in order before one ignores this data.

To be sure, there are a multitude of articles, books and monographs that have helped to push forward our study of Israel's social values and life. Unfortunately, a full treatment is beyond this short introduction. Now we turn to how these works have influenced the methodological approach of this work.

### 1.3 Methodology

As a precursor to a discussion of what this study attempts to do, it might be helpful to say what it does not attempt to do. First, this work does not try to establish, confirm, or deny the existence of the pan-Mediterraneanists' model, though at times we allow ourselves the freedom to use their results when we believe they are justified by the biblical data itself. And in those circumstances, we try to give our reasons to employ a particular model. Our purpose is to understand the biblical semantics of honor and shame and how they operate within Deuteronomy 28 and with regard to 2 Samuel 7, two passages that we believe were pivotal texts later the prophets and psalmists.

Second, the focus of this study is on biblical Israel, not historical Israel and her religion, though the two are certainly related in various complex ways. Thus, we are trying to understand the world of ideas in the text, even if we leave aside the questions connected to the historical relationship that gave birth to those ideas. For example, if one accepts our argument that honor and shame are pivotal to the curses and blessings of Israel and one assumes that chapter 28 has anti-Assyrian or even anti-Babylonian undertones to it, then one could ask how honor and shame are employed to subvert foreign power. Or conversely, one could ask if Israel is absorbing part of Assyria's honor-shame system, while putting her unique YHWHistic "spin" on it. These

questions assume much, however, and the political and social functions of these values in their given contexts is not our purpose.

Attempting to reconstruct Israelite history and religion for the purpose of studying her social values is an impossible task, given that we just lack comprehensive data to do so. This study attempts to avoid the complexities of full-scale social, historical and religious reconstructions of “Israel” by focusing on the social values expressed. Surely what we find in the Hebrew Bible are glimpses into the ideologies that the writers of these texts produced for their social, political, and religious ends, even if these ends remain somewhat shrouded. We would even assume that other ancient Israelites shared these writers’ views, but such an admission is a far cry from a historical or social reconstruction of the historical Israel. Therefore, we consciously do not attempt to ask the question (as important as it is), “What is the historical, political, and social functions of honor or shame as it is expressed in Deuteronomic blessings or Davidic Covenant?”

In any event, this methodological approach is partly in response to the complexity of historical reconstruction of Israel’s social and religious life, given the tendentious nature of the biblical texts.<sup>168</sup> But because this study focuses on the social values of some of the biblical writers, focusing mainly the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic writers, who depicted them and the redactors that later took them up, the historicity of the events therein is a secondary concern. One example should suffice to demonstrate the approach that this study takes.

As a small aside and response to Stiebert’s and Huber’s works, we should say that we have chosen to avoid “psychologizing” biblical Israel. All too often we hear the

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<sup>168</sup> For an example, see Philip R. Davies, *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’*, Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1992. K. Stone, *Sex, Honor and Power*, 1996.

drumbeat of how shame is used as means of social control in “religion.” While this may be true in many instances, our goal is not to explain some type of universal psychological human experience of, response to or use of shame in religion. If one is sensitive to the dangers of utilizing the “Mediterranean personality” in studying the Bible, then the same should true of applying modern psychological studies.

In any event, our approach to the study of Israel’s values without reconstructing her history, we believe, is a feasible approach. For example, the story of the capture of the ark by the Philistines (1 Sam 4–6) and the destruction of the Temple (2 Kgs 25:9) are incorporated into the same history.<sup>169</sup> Both stories teach of YHWH and Israel’s defeat and shame. But the historicity of the former “event” is considered dubious by many scholars, while the latter is not. Yet both inform us of Israel’s cultural values, though the historical fabrication is perhaps *more* beneficial to scholars. Oswyn Murray (discussing Jacob Burckhardt) is instructive in this regard.

It does not matter whether the stories which it uses are true, as long as they are believed to be true. And even a forgery is an important piece of evidence for the period that perpetrated it, since it reveals more clearly than a genuine article the conceptions and beliefs about the past of the age that created it. This principle of unconscious revelation through representation . . . is one of the most powerful tools in the modern historian’s study of mentalities. As Burckhardt saw very clearly, it offers a solution to the sterile disputes of positivism as to whether a fact is true or false, and how such a proposition can be established; cultural history is primarily interested in beliefs and attitudes, rather than events—and falsehoods are therefore often more valuable than truths.<sup>170</sup>

Therefore, even if a biblical author “lies” about an account’s historical details, he still must embrace values that would resonate with his intended readers, especially if he intends his work to work effectively as propaganda or to preserve his community’s

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<sup>169</sup> We leave aside any discussion of sources here, merely to make the point about the values of stories.

<sup>170</sup> J. Burckhardt and O. Murray, *The Greeks and Greek Civilization* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), xxxi.



identity. The historical lie, then, cannot help but reveal something about the beliefs and values of those who produced, embraced, and preserved the work. In any event, the constructs of Israelite society and, therefore, shame and honor as depicted in this literature can primarily be understood as the expressed mentality of the authors/editors. Thus, the objects of our study are the varying concepts honor and shame in *biblical* Israel.<sup>171</sup>

Third, the study does not attempt answer larger value-related questions, namely how the values as defined in Israel's literature govern the power dynamics between economic classes or genders. That is not to say that we do not comment on some of the connections between honor, wealth, gender, or power. In fact, we note that women's honor is defined in spheres unrelated to her sexuality, despite the Mediterraneanists' claims. These issues, however, do not help us explore the issue at hand, and so they are not our focus.

What we do intend to do is to heed the protests of Herzfeld and Avrahami to undertake a more comprehensive study of the semantics of honor and shame in the native context of biblical Israel, the Hebrew Bible. We believe that such a move will serve as control on our own semantic study of the social values at hand, even if we do not necessarily hold to all of Avrahami's methodological convictions.

Lastly, as we have said in our review of Laniak, we believe that it is possible to understand the honor-shame discourse in a narrative when the semantics of honor and shame are properly laid out in the entire Hebrew Bible. The flaws in his work were concentrated on the fact that he provided a model for which he had little semantic

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<sup>171</sup> As we have said, however, the point of this work is to investigate honor-shame complex in the context of covenant. We must, unfortunately, leave the question of historical reconstruction for a future article.

support in the text of Esther. Had he endeavored to do what we do in our second chapter, we believe that his efforts might have been more successful. Therefore, we will attempt to employ a lexical-literary analysis to our texts, which we believe will reveal the relationship of honor and shame to the covenantal passages we treat.

In summary, the goals of this study are more modest. In studying the intersection between covenant and honor and shame, our main goals were two-fold: (1) to understand the semantics of honor and shame in the biblical texts, (2) to apply these results using lexical-literary analysis to Deuteronomy 28 and the 2 Samuel 7 and its literary context, and (3) to test some of the claims of the pan-Mediterranean school using stricter, less comparative-anthropological methods. In particular, we wanted to see whether honor and shame really operated as binary opposites in biblical literature, whether they operated as central values in biblical Israel, and if they did, how they were understood.

We will conclude that honor and shame in certain semantic domains were seen as binary opposites and appear to have been central to the conception of biblical Israel's defining relationship with her deity. This is not to say that every lexical or idiomatic expression involving honor or shame has a "shame" equivalent. And this does not even imply that "honor" is always conceived of similarly in all contexts. The biblical texts exhibit a varied group of expressions to communicate its social values in specific contexts.

Lastly, we must self-consciously repeat our caveat. We make no claims that our study completely escapes circularity or entirely avoids borrowing from anthropologically sensitive works—what study can claim complete isolation and non-circularity, socially or linguistically? But when we use anthropological models, we try to show that such ideas exist in many places in the Hebrew Bible. That is, we try to

provide textual justification when use the anthropological models. For example, we utilize Malina's three-zone concept in our discussion of in our discussion of honor and the context Davidic covenant, and we attempt to show that such a concept is not completely foreign to the biblical writers. Now, we should give a bit more detail to these general statements in a discussion of the structure of our work.

#### 1.4 The structure of our study

Though the purpose of this study is to explore how honor and shame inform the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic expression of the Davidic covenant, the heart of it is really the second chapter, our investigation of the semantics of honor and shame in the Bible. As we have stated, to this point in time, there has been no single study that has sought to understand the operation of how honor and shame operate in the Hebrew, Bible, though there have been many attempts to study various articles and lexical entries to study honor or shame words and expressions. We attempt to heed the methodological criticisms of scholars like Herzfeld and Yael Avrahami, that before comparative data enter into the discussion, one must first explore the concept in a particular culture. As we have stated, we will look at the question of whether honor and shame form binary opposites in the Hebrew Bible, at least in some semantic fields. To do this, we have restricted our study in a number of ways, following Yael Avrahami's stricter lexical methodology.

Following Avrahami, there are three methodical restrictions that we employed in our study in order to isolate biblical Israel's meaning of particular Hebrew words or phrases. First, we have attempted to explore the meanings of lexica like בּוֹשׁ with its derivatives in contexts where terms like כָּלָם , חֲרָף , קָלָל, or the like do not appear. Secondly, we have consciously chosen not to understand roots in Hebrew from the context of

other Semitic languages, though along the way, we note the larger Semitic linguistic environment of these roots. Thirdly, we have tried to approach prose and poetic contexts separately. In this way, we hope to explore possible synonyms and antonyms for the lexica we treat.

Perhaps where we could be most criticized for methodological circularity, especially given our desire to explore the question of the possible binary relationship of the concept of honor and shame, is where we have divided our study into the following semantic categories: heavy / light (important / unimportant), high / low, and other.<sup>172</sup> One could claim that at the outset, we have framed our discussion using semantically opposite, binary categories that will inextricably lead to the result that honor and shame are binary opposites, at least in certain contexts. Our choice, however, to frame the discussion in this way is not as circular as it appears. We believe that it is a well-established fact that כבוד and קלל are semantic opposites and that the former means “honor” in certain contexts and קלל some type of “dishonor.” The same could be said for the pair רום and שפל. The real question involved in these cases was how the concepts of honor and shame should be understood. It is our contention that the primary force “honor” in the semantic domains that these words represent is positional or estimative, whether for a society, a subgroup or individual. Honor as described here has far less to do with psychological experience. Thus, our study will show that with regard to covenant, while a emotive (other’s subjective) understanding of honor and shame is not absent from covenantal contexts, it is the positional concept of these values that primarily in view. Of course, for honor and shame, however defined, to operate as motivation in the blessings and curses of the Deuteronomic covenant, for example, one

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<sup>172</sup> This final category is an amalgam of lexica and expressions that are prominent in the Bible, but have no unified semantic similarities.

must assume some emotive element. The text, however, does not assume the subject element to be the primary concern, however. The primary concern is what position or esteem the nation or the king will occupy.

What was more at issue for us is Avrahami's claim that בֹּזֵז is more akin to "disappointed" than "shame" and that this result not only overturns a long-established understanding of this word, but also denies the consensus view that "honor" and "shame" are binary opposites in the Bible.

With regard to בֹּזֵז, it is fine in our view to understand it and other traditionally identified "shame" synonyms (e.g., חָרַף, בָּלַם) as denoting some type of shame or shaming, if one readily keeps in mind that such words are used to describe a variety of intense experiences that go beyond what any English equivalent can embrace, including Avrahami's "disappointed."

With these semantic categories in hand, we then turn to our two biblical covenants, the Deuteronomic Code (chapter 3) and the Deuteronomic depiction of the Davidic Covenant (chapter 4). In our view to show the integrality of honor and shame, we chose not to take the route of Daube, who attempted to show that shame was an underlying principle to the Deuteronomic laws. Instead we turn to one of the key elements that define the relationship between YHWH and his people, the covenantal blessings and curses. We not only show how many of the blessings imply a type of honor (economic, military, etc.), but also, as we have alluded to in this introduction, how the summation of the blessings implies that all of the blessings are to be seen as a way of giving Israel pre-eminent position and prestige throughout the earth.

Likewise, many of the curses are a type of shaming of Israel, and whatever position and esteem Israel may have had due to their loyal relationship with YHWH, would not be forfeited due to their disobedience. It is not surprising that honor and

shame are important concepts in other biblical texts that depend on Deuteronomy. We then explore two such texts, 1 Samuel 4 (the capture of the ark) and Psalm 74 (a lament over the fall of Jerusalem).

While our study of the Deuteronomic covenant focuses on a key element of that covenant, the blessing and curses, our approach to the Davidic covenant in chapter four sets the Davidic covenant in the context of the honor-shame discourse that the Deuteronomic historians. The promises to David for an everlasting covenant, a temple, and even the discipline his son would receive are set against the preceding Saul-Eli narrative, which is framed in terms of honor and shame. From a social-values perspective, the Deuteronomists argue that migration of power and honor from the north to the south is predicated on how the northern royal and priestly houses treated YHWH as “unimportant” (קלל),<sup>173</sup> that is, less than the honor (כבוד) he deserved.

As a result, the deity makes both the northern priestly and royal houses eternally קלל (“inconsequential, of little account”). In the Davidic promises, honor is understood as eternal pre-eminence and prestige. Though shame is not explicitly part of the Davidic covenant, the Deuteronomist understands the discipline in 2 Samuel 7:14 as including shame, which can entail a loss of power, position and prestige. We will, however, argue that the editor of Samuel-Kings represents the discipline of the northern priestly and royal houses of the early monarchy as eternally diminished in power and prestige beneath those of the north.

We should add that dishonor in the Deuteronomic presentation stems from “bad heart.” Both Eli and Saul have bad “hearts,” while David and Zadok who will be granted eternal prestige by YHWH are faithful and concerned for YHWH’s honor. Eli’s

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<sup>173</sup> Sometimes, shame is even depicted as death or non-existence as our second chapter will show.

bad heart is represented by his diminishing sight, while Saul's bad heart is narratively presented in the context of a height-heart contrast. Saul, a type of Israelite "Goliath," is terrified of the Philistine giant, while David, empowered by his concern for YHWH and Israel's honor, bests the Philistine champion (and by extension the cowardly Israelite giant), proving why YHWH does not look upon a man's stature.

Thus, when YHWH grants David an everlasting covenant, it involves two parts, kingship and temple, and the Deuteronomistic narrative is in part a justification for why power and prestige should eventually shift from northern centers of power under Saul and Eli at Shiloh to David and Zadok in Jerusalem. The exchange of priestly and royal and position and prestige between the north and south and the eventual heightening of the prestige of the south to eternal pre-eminence is predicated on their dishonoring (קלל) YHWH with regard to cultic matters, the very place he should be most honored (כבוד).

Finally, in the very last chapter, we will make some conclusions about new directions for research on honor and shame and covenant. Because this work does seek to study the topic in other cultures (e.g., Hittite, Assyrian, etc.), we suggest possible avenue of future research.

## CHAPTER 2: THE VOCABULARY AND SEMANTICS OF HONOR AND SHAME

### 2.0 Introduction

Commenting on the problematic usage of the terms “honor” and “shame,” Michael Herzfeld noted in 1980, “To date, little effort has been directed towards the comparison of usages [of honor and shame terms] within each linguistic tradition or towards a critical appraisal of the assumption that indigenous terms mean much the same thing wherever they occur.”<sup>174</sup> Moreover, for Herzfeld, understanding a culture’s indigenous terms implies having direct access to a living culture. Biblical scholars, however, have no such contact with ancient Israel to learn her way of life; and so it is impossible to directly study the linguistic system of a native speaker of Biblical Hebrew. The culture and language available to us are the sedimentary layers of Israel’s culture and linguistic system that were redacted over the centuries.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, since Herzfeld’s challenge the situation has changed very little for the discipline of Hebrew Bible. There have been no large-scale, systematic studies on the vocabulary of honor/honoring and shame/shaming words, expressions and actions, though we have mentioned Walter Kim and Klopfenstein’s as two exceptions regarding shame/shaming. The best sources of the relevant vocabulary are scattered in lexicons, theological dictionaries, commentaries, articles and monographs.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> M. Herzfeld, “Honour and Shame: Problems in Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems,” *Man*, New Series 15, no. 2 (1980): 339–351. J. Avrahami, “בִּיְשׁוּׁ in the Psalms – Shame or Disappointment?” *JSOT* 34, no. 3 (2010): 339.

<sup>175</sup> Avrahami invokes Geertz’ distinction between “near” and “far” description. Similarly, see C. Geertz, “From the Native’s Point of View,” in *Interpretive Social Science* (eds. P. Rabinow and W. M. Sullivan; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979): 225–42 (esp., 226–27).

<sup>176</sup> For a review of some of the pertinent literature, see our last chapter and Y. Avrahami, 297 n. 9.





שהח.<sup>179</sup> One might also count among these the nouns *שְׁנִינָה*, *מִשָּׁל*, *וְרָעָה*, *כָּלֵב*, or even *רָעָה*.

Additionally, it is not unusual to see these roots used in combination with one another in idioms. For example, YHWH promises Abraham in Genesis 12:2, “I will make your name great” (*וַאֲנִי גָדְלָהּ שְׁמִיךָ*); cf. 2 Sam 7:9) or “to make a name for oneself” (*נַעֲשֶׂה-לָנוּ שֵׁם*, Genesis 11:4.). The psalmist in Psalm 34:4 encourages the congregation, “Magnify YHWH (*גָּדְלוּ לִיהוָה*) with me; let us exalt (*וְנִרְמִימָה שְׁמוֹ*) his name together.” In the same way, Nehemiah 9:5b the Levites and other leaders of Israel instruct Israel: “Stand, bless YHWH your God, from everlasting to everlasting. May your glorious name be blessed (*עַל-כָּל-בְּרָכָה וְתִהְיֶה לְהַלְלָהּ*) and high above everything that is blessed and praised (*וְיִבָּרְכוּ שֵׁם כְּבוֹדְךָ*) and high above everything that is blessed and praised (*וְיִמְרוֹמֵם*).” One can even add to these lists, rituals and common actions associated with honoring and shame.

Some common actions associated with honor or honoring include: anointing with oil (Jdg 9:8-9), defeating an enemy in battle (Exod 14:17; 2 Sam 23:19; 2 Ki 14:10); giving wealth to someone (Num 22:37), obeying God or humans (Deut 5:16), showing public support or acceptance to someone (1 Sam 9:6), or giving ritual gifts to one in mourning (2 Sam 10:3). In the same way, acts of shame and shaming are associated with “spittle” (*פְּלִמּוֹת* in Isa 50:6) and *ב + ירַק* “to spit [in the face]” (Deut 25:9; *לְמִשָּׁל* in Job 17:6; Job 30:10); *נכה + לחי* “to strike the cheek” (ibid);<sup>180</sup> to pull or cut someone’s beard (2 Sam 10:4; Isa 50:6), to expose one’s genitals (*נִכְלָמִים קָאֵר* in 2 Sam 10:4-5), etc. As we can see, the lexicon of honor and shame, however precisely understood in their political, economic, familial, military or moral contexts, is potentially a vast one.

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<sup>179</sup> Note that Jeremiah 24:9 combines many of these concepts: “I will make them a horror (*לְרָעָה*), an undesirable thing (*רָעָה*) to all of the kingdoms of the earth, a disgrace (*לְחִרְפָּה*), a parable (*וּלְמִשָּׁל*), a taunt (*לְשִׁנְיָה*), and an insignificant thing (*וּלְקִלְלָהּ*) in all of the places where I drive you.”

<sup>180</sup> For an overview of the commonly accepted shame terminology, see L. Huber, *Experience of Shame*, 43–56.

Despite these challenges, we take seriously Avrahami and Herzfeld's methodological concerns. This chapter seeks to make a modest contribution toward understanding the semantics of biblical honor and shame. Given the size of the task, the most practical approach would be to examine the relevant expressions and vocabulary using the major semantic concepts they represent based on our research: importance versus unimportance, lofty and low, making or having a valuable or great name and finally shame terminology (e.g., בוש, חרף, בלם, etc.). As we will see, these categories cut across every aspect of ancient Israelite life.

Methodologically speaking, while we will consider the meanings of nominal forms in this study, we will mainly concentrate on verbal forms. To avoid arguing in a circular manner, we have labored to isolate roots from other honor and shame language when seeking an initial definition. This approach will become most evident in our discussion of "shame" roots. Some circularity, however, is unavoidable (e.g., our discussion of קלל), given the fact that we have a finite document and no surviving Classical Hebrew speakers, and purported honor and shame language appears clustered in a majority of circumstances. Lastly, though we will mention the meanings certain Hebrew roots have in other Semitic languages, we have attempted to study the relevant lexica in their native biblical contexts. In this way, we hope to meet Herzfeld's primary methodological concern, studying words in their native environment before comparing them with another cultural system. Unfortunately, it cannot be the goal to make those connections in this chapter.

The chapter has two further objectives. After our analysis of some of the pertinent vocabulary, we will attempt to address briefly several questions that scholars have posed in the debate over honor and shame: Do the concepts of honor and shame

form a binary pair of values? Or should we challenge<sup>181</sup> that scholarly consensus?<sup>182</sup> Can we tell from the vocabulary of Israel whether we should treat honor and shame as central values? Is female honor to be defined merely around issues of sexuality?

## 2.1 Importance versus Unimportance (כבוד versus קלה, קלל, and בזוה)

One of the main roots employed to express honor in the Hebrew Bible is כבוד with its major verbal, substantival (כָּבוֹד and כְּבוֹדָה) and adjectival (כָּבֵד) forms. The root כבוד occurs in every stem in Biblical Hebrew and is found in all of the Semitic languages.<sup>183</sup> With all of its usages, it connotes “weightiness,”<sup>184</sup> while its main antonyms — קלה,<sup>185</sup> קלל and בזוה, by extension — imply “lightness.”<sup>186</sup> As we will show, with regard to the social values of honor and shame, the opposite pairs denote *social importance and unimportance* or becoming so. Thus, they relate more closely to social status or rank, perceived or real,

<sup>181</sup> Avrahami not only concludes that the verbal root בוש means something closer to “disappointment,” but also calls into question the consensus represented by the pan-Mediterranean social-scientific approach that honor and shame are opposite concepts (see pp. 16–19). Also see J. K. Chance, “The Anthropology of Honor and Shame: Culture, Values and Practice,” *Semeia* 68 (1994): 139–51; J. Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame*, 71–75; R. J. Coombe, “Barren Ground: Re-Conceiving Honour and Shame in the Field of Mediterranean Ethnography,” *Anthropologica* 32 (1990): 221–38.

<sup>182</sup> This position is represented by the following: T. Laniak, *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*; P. J. Botha, ‘Isaiah 37.21–35: Sennacherib’s Siege of Jerusalem as a Challenge to the Honour of Yahweh’, *OTE* 13, no. 3 (2000): 269–82 (esp. 279–80). J. J. Pilch and B. J. Malina, eds., ‘Honor/Shame’, in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993), 95–104 [95–96].

<sup>183</sup> The root means “heavy” and by extension “important.” See C. Dohmen, “כָּבֵד *kābēd*,” *TDOT* 7:13.

<sup>184</sup> Note that thought כבוד and קלל appear in antithetical parallelism only 11 times (1 Sam 2:30; 2 Sam 6:22; 1 Kgs 12:4, 10 [cf. 2 Chr 10:4, 10]; Isa 8:23; 23:9), it is more than any other “shame” root. In fact, כבוד only infrequently occurs opposite any traditional “shame” root. For example, it appears twice opposite קלה, once against בוש (Isa 66:5), once opposite בזוה (1 Sam 2:30; Mal 1:6; Ps 15:4), and once opposite חרף (Prov 14:31). It never occurs opposite כלם, קלם, or גרף, though קלמה appears opposite כבוד once (Ps 4:3).

<sup>185</sup> See J. Scharbert, “קלל *qll*,” *TDOT* 13:38.

<sup>186</sup> The root זלל (“be light, worthless,” “make light of”) is included here, though it appears only once with כבוד. Lamentations 1:8 states, “Jerusalem has sinned grievously, and as a result has become an impurity. Everyone who honored her (כבוד) make light of her (זלל), for they see her nakedness. She herself groans and turns away.” The sense is that others despise Jerusalem for the nakedness that dishonors her. Morally speaking, the root is normally associated with those that act shamefully (Prov 23:20–21; // כלם in 28:7), as we will see later.

as opposed to an inner, emotive experience of low rank, though the latter could represent the scorn that one might receive for being of low rank, as a synonym כִּוָּה seems to indicate.<sup>187</sup>

### 2.1.1 Importance, high esteem, prestige, fame, high rank: כָּבֵד

An overview of the verbal form of כָּבֵד reveals that it denotes “heaviness.” It can express literal heaviness (e.g., Eli, 1 Sam 4:18 [LXX βαρύς];<sup>188</sup> Absalom’s hair, 2 Sam 14:26 [LXX καταβαρύνω]), heaviness from effort (e.g., Moses’ hands, Exod 17:12), hard labor (1 Kgs 12:4), hard punishment of God or men (1 Sam 5:6; Jdg 1:35), severe event or action (e.g., famine, Gen 12:10; sin, Gen 18:20). It can also have a numerical sense, as in a great number of people (Gen 50:9) or insects (Exod 8:20). And it can also be used of a defective body part (e.g., eyes, Gen 48:10 [LXX βαρυπύεω]).

Closer to our purposes, however, is the association between a person’s “social weightiness” or prestige (כְּבוֹד) and wealth (עֲשָׂרָה),<sup>189</sup> and together, the pair seems to operate as a hendiadys meaning “prestigious wealth.”<sup>190</sup> Biblical writers normally maintain that prestigious wealth comes from YHWH. In 1 Kings 3:13, Solomon is promised riches (עֲשָׂרָה) and honor (כְּבוֹד; cf. 2 Chr 1:11 [LXX πλοῦτον and δόξαν]). In his praise to God, David states that all glory and riches comes from YHWH (1 Chr 29:11–12 [LXX ὁ πλοῦτος καὶ ἡ δόξα]). David dies full of riches and prestige (1 Chr 29:28). The wisdom of Proverbs connects the blessings of wisdom with prestigious wealth (Prov

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<sup>187</sup> For a list of synonyms see M.A. Grisanti, “כִּוָּה,” *NIDOTT* 1:630.

<sup>188</sup> See Dohmen for list of how the LXX renders various forms of כָּבֵד. C. Dohmen, *TDOT* 7:17.

<sup>189</sup> Sometimes wealth is merely called כָּבֵד (Gen 31:1; Isa 10:3; 10:18). Wealth should not be conceived of in a strictly monetary sense, though. All of the possessions of one’s house, including family could be considered wealth (Gen 13:2; Isa 22:24).

<sup>190</sup> M. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A new Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 157.

3:16; 8:18; Prov 22:4). Lastly, the kings of Israel are often described as receiving prestigious wealth (2 Chr 17:5; 18:1; 32:27). It is considered a curse in the law and a serious sickness (תִּלְיָ רָע) in wisdom literature for others to enjoy one's wealth and honor (Deut 28:30–34; Eccl 6:2).

Ideally, however, wealth, honor and good character were to be linked. For example, Proverbs 22:4 states, “The result of humility (עֲנָוָה) — fear of YHWH is riches and honor and life (עֲשֹׂר וְקִבְיֹר וְחַיִּים).”<sup>191</sup> We see the same ideal association between character (wisdom) and prestigious wealth in Proverbs 3:16; 8:18 and 11:16. This is not only true of men, but also of women (Prov 11:16). Thus, women's honor was not linked to chastity alone.<sup>192</sup> Lastly, that the association of good character and prestige were merely an ideal is clear from Psalm 73. The rich can receive prestige from society (v. 10), health (vv. 4–5) and great success (v. 12), even despite their wickedness (v. 11), so much so that the pure in heart (בָּרִי לֵב) could envy them (קִנָּא).

Wealth has another association with social status and prestige, someone of economic importance. One might demonstrate the prestige of others through the giving of wealth. We can see this concept operating with the superior partner in covenants. Wisdom and law, for example, dictated that when Israel honored (כָּבֵד, LXX τίμα) YHWH with the wealth (הֵנִן, LXX σός) he had blessed them with, he would bless them more (Prov 3:9–10). Thus, the exchange of appropriate gifts was to reflect the status of

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<sup>191</sup> For the translation see R. E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC 22; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 164.

<sup>192</sup> It appears to us that אִשְׁת־חַיִל in Proverbs 31:10 is probably an honorific designation that encompasses wealth and social position, as it does in Ruth (cf. Ruth 2:1). Even if we should be incorrect, however, the idealized description of the wife encapsulates her ability to care for and administer her household (v. 15), give to the poor (v. 20), speak wisely (v. 26), etc. “Strength and honor are her clothing” (עֲזָרָהּ, v.25). Her husband accordingly praises her as surpassing all women (עֲלָהּ, vv. 28–29) and she is even honored with praise at the city gates (v. 31). Thus, we are in agreement with Domeris that, contrary to the Mediterraneanists, the sapiential ideal of women's honor is not confined to sexual issues. See W. R. Domeris, “Shame and Honor in Proverbs,” 97–8.

those involved and the nature of their relationship. In fact, blessings are seen as gifts, and בְּרָכָה is used to mean “gift” on a number of occasions.<sup>193</sup>

In some instances כֶּבֶד could be rendered “payment,” though even in those cases “payment” is not necessarily devoid of the idea of giving or recognizing a person of greater social esteem or position. Balak, for example, sends Balaam a large retinue of prestigious men (נִכְבְּדִים // ἐντιμωτέρους, Num 22:15) to offer him great wealth for cursing Israel (comp. Num 20:18 and 22:37 [LXX τιμήσαι]).<sup>194</sup> Thus, while “payment” is primarily in view, wealth alone is not the only value in play. The reason Balak sent a large group of prestigious men was to demonstrate respect to a great prophet outwardly. Also instructive is the subtle interplay after Balaam obeys YHWH and blesses Israel. In Numbers 24:11, Balak says, “Now off with you to your home! I promised I would greatly honor you (כֶּבֶד אֶכְבְּדְּךָ, LXX Τιμήσω σε), but YHWH has denied you your honor (מִכְבוֹד, LXX τῆς δόξης).”<sup>195</sup> The point has not escaped the LXX

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<sup>193</sup> When describing the Israelites pilgrimage festivals the Israelite are instructed, “do not appear before YHWH empty-handed (וְלֹא יָרָאָה אֶת־פָּנֶי יְהוָה רִיקִים), each man, a gift proportional to the blessing of YHWH your God (אִישׁ כַּמְתֵּנָה יָדוֹ כְּבִרְכַּת יְהוָה אֲלֵהֶיךָ), which he gave to you” (Deut 16:16-17). In addition, when David comes to Ziklag after battle in 1 Sam 30:26, he sent part of the spoils of war to the elders of Judah and his friends (לְזִקְנֵי יְהוּדָה לְדַעְוָה) with a message, “Here is a present for you, a gift from the spoils from the enemies of YHWH (הִנֵּה לָכֶם בְּרָכָה מִשָּׁלַל אֹיְבֵי יְהוָה).” In Gen 33:8-11, Jacob meets Esau and attempts to give him gifts to win favor with his brother from whom he had stolen a blessing. In v. 11, Jacob says, “Please take the gifts (קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּרִכְתִּי), which are brought to you, but in v. 10, it is called מִנְחָה. Similarly, Abigail attempts to diffuse the insulted David’s anger with a gift (בְּרָכָה) in 1 Samuel 25:27. In 2 Kings 5:15, Naaman gives a בְּרָכָה to the prophet after his healing. For other examples, see Joshua 15:19 and Judge 1:15.

<sup>194</sup> While the requisite vocabulary does not appear, we can see how payment functions in the context of covenantal partners. Hiram had had a parity treaty with David (אָהָב; 1 Kgs 5:1) and did the same with Solomon (1 Kgs 5:26). Hiram was to provide builders, materials and their shipment to Israel for YHWH’s and Solomon’s palace. For that Solomon was supposed to provide Hiram’s royal house with food (1 Kgs 5:9) and cities in the Galilee region (1 Kgs 9:11-13). After inspecting the cities which Solomon gave him, Hiram was sorely disappointed with their quality (לֹא יֵשְׁרוּ בְעֵינָיו): “What are these cities which you have given me, my brother?” The cities were neither fitting of the gifts Hiram’s gave nor befitting of the nature of their relationship of equal status.

<sup>195</sup> According to Louw-Nida, τιμᾶω in Koiné Greek had the same sense: “To provide aid or financial assistance, with the implication that this is an appropriate means of showing respect – ‘to give assistance to, to provide for the needs of as a sign of respect, to support and honor.’ χήρας τίμα τὰς

translator; YHWH has not only kept Balaam from gaining wealth, but more social prestige.

Aside from connections between wealth and social prestige, both humans and deities gain כבוד through deeds that display one's greatness, especially military victory (often referred to by the Context Group as acquired honor). For example, Exodus 14:18, "The Egyptians will know that I am YHWH when I have gloried myself (תהקדר) over Pharaoh, his chariots and his charioteers." That is to say, YHWH will show his superiority through victory over the Pharaoh and his armies. Likewise, Ezekiel 28:22 states, "Say, 'Thus says the Lord YHWH: I am against you, O Sidon. I will be glorified (ויקברתי) in your midst, and they will know that I am YHWH when I execute judgment in it and manifest my holiness in it.'"<sup>196</sup> Benaiah and Abishai are "honored" because of their fighting ability (2 Sam 10:3 // 1 Chr 19:3; also see 2 Kgs 14:10 // 2 Chr 25:19). Lastly, the people hold Samuel in "honor" (i.e., hold him in high esteem) because everything he says comes to pass (1 Sam 9:6). David is honored because of his faithfulness and relationship to the king (1 Sam 22:14). One's deed, then can earn them social clout or esteem.

There is an expectation that a person who does great deeds, one who has a worthy character or is in a high position, rightfully deserves to be treated accordingly whether in word or deed. Thus, they are called to "honor" or "fear" their superiors. In Isaiah 24:15, the coastlands are called to give glory to YHWH (i.e., praise him) for his

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ὄντως χήρας 'support and honor those widows who really are left alone.' In LEH, among the primary definitions of τιμή are "honor" (Esther 1:20) or a "mark of honor," (Sir 45:12). It is used in such phrases as "the honors due him" (Sir 38:1), the "honors of the fathers" (2 Macc 4:15) and "for honor and glory" (Exod 28:2).

<sup>196</sup> This idea is normally expressed through the word "name" (שם). For example, David comes to Goliath in the "name of YHWH" (1 Sam 17:45), which will give him victory. In 1 Samuel 18:30, David is said to be more successful than all of Saul's servants over the Philistines, thus, David's name became "famous" (יקר). We discuss these idioms below.



majesty (יָסָד, v. 14). With regard to position, in Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 children are instructed to “honor (כָּבֵד) your father and mother” (cf. Lev 19:3 “revere” [יָרָא]).<sup>197</sup> Commenting on the fifth commandment, Durham states:

To “give honor” to father and mother means more than to be subject to them, or respectful of their wishes: they are to be given precedence by the recognition of the importance which is their by right, esteemed for their priority, and loved for it as well. As Yahweh is honored for his priority to all life, so father and mother must be honored for their priority, as Yahweh’s instruments to the lives of their children.<sup>198</sup>

Likewise, as Weinfeld notes, honoring one’s father and mother goes beyond reverence and even extends to physical care.<sup>199</sup> The opposite of honoring one’s parents would be too treat them contemptibly, disrespectfully or as unimportant (יָקַל, Lev. 20:9).<sup>200</sup>

Similarly, people in other positions deserved to be treated with esteem by those of lower status. Complaining about how Israel offers inferior gifts to him, YHWH complains in Malachi 1:6: “‘A son honors (יְכַבֵּד) his father, a slave his master. But if I am a father, where is my honor (כְּבוֹדִי)? If I am a master (אֲדֹנִים), where is my fear (יִרְאָה),’” says YHWH of Hosts to you, ‘O priests who despises my name (בִּזְיוֹן שְׁמִי).’”<sup>201</sup> YHWH continues in verse 14, “...I am a great King, and my name is revered (נִזְרָא) among the nations.” YHWH’s of Host’s complaint is that the honor due him is great, and he is given much worse than would be acceptable to a less deserving human. As we have

<sup>197</sup> Semantically speaking יָרָא (“reverence”) and כָּבֵד are used in the same familial context as equivalents in Akkadian (*palāhu* and *kabātu*). See M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A new Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 310.

<sup>198</sup> J. I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3; Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), 291. Similarly see Childs, though without the emphasis on the connection between the position parents in the place of God. B. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical Theological Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 418–19.

<sup>199</sup> M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 310–11.

<sup>200</sup> Weinfeld notes that thought the piel normally signifies “a curse” or “insult,” the basic meaning of *qll* is like Akkadian *qullulu* / *gullulu* ‘to discredit / dishonor.’” Ibid, 309.

<sup>201</sup> They treat his name as if it is of low regard. Also, as GKC §135m notes, one can be translated “Where is the honor due me...Where is the respect due me?”

seen, the nature of one's status demands fitting gifts, and for Israel these were spelled out in the covenant she shared with YHWH (v. 8). At any rate, the passage demonstrates that a master, parent or king deserves honor from those in their household and kingdom *based on their position*, not necessarily on the esteem of others for their great deeds or character, though in the ideal world the two were to be joined. Such is the call to "honor" YHWH with praise (Isa 24:15). Thus, the failure to reflect the worth of a person in a superior position with appropriate speech, deeds or gifts was to despise them as "inconsequential, unimportant" (קלל or בזה; Exod 21:17; Lev 20:9; 1 Sam 2:30; 1 Sam 3:13). In English idiom this would be similar to "slighting" or treating someone as "nothing."

Lastly, sometimes כבוד was a metonym for someone who was in the upper stratum of society.<sup>202</sup> We can see this in the case of Joseph when he tells his brothers, "Tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt..." (Gen 45:13). Joseph is referring not only to his great wealth, but to his important position in the kingdom.

As we have seen thus far, "honor" or "social importance" (כבוד) is not just relative high position, but the appropriate respect someone believes they should be accorded based on their position, wealth, achievement or character. Making a claim to position or social esteem, however, can be either accepted or denied by others who have already been accorded that social stature.<sup>203</sup> We see the first situation operating in the context of diplomatic discourse between covenant partners. David attempts to honor (i.e., recognize the royal claims publicly) of Hanun's household by sending distinguished envoys to mourn his father (e.g., 2 Sam 10:1ff.). In this case, however, Hanun and his

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<sup>202</sup> C. Dohmen, *TDOT* 7:19.

<sup>203</sup> One might also challenge a superior for a higher position. In the MT and LXX<sup>A</sup> David wins great popularity and praise for his military exploits, which makes Saul greatly jealous (1 Sam 18:8), causing the king to watch out for David's royal aspirations.

advisers view David's gift as a veiled attempt to destroy him.<sup>204</sup> Thus, he insults David by cutting the beards of the envoys and stripping them naked.<sup>205</sup>

With regard to the second situation, one might claim a status that others are not willing to accord him. Though expressed with a different Hebrew root, we can also see this tension working in Proverbs 25:6–7, “Do not honor yourself (אַל-תִּתְהַדָּר) in the presence of a king or stand in the place of the place of great people (גְּדֹלִים). For it is better to be told, ‘Come up here,’ rather than to be lowered (מִתְשַׁפֵּל) in the presence of a noble.”<sup>206</sup> Thus, someone might presumptuously make a public claim for rank or importance by standing or sitting closer to the person of position and prestige. Therefore, a person of high status might deny the claims of others. Lastly, Proverbs 25:7 notes, “Better to make oneself out to be unimportant (נִקְלָה) and have a servant than to honor oneself (מִתְהַפָּדֵר) but lack food.” Lastly, being rejected altogether from the presence of an honorable person is an act of extreme dishonor (1 Sam 15:30; Mal 2:3).<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Though we are attempting to limit our cross-cultural anthropological evidence, one might note how gifts can function in agonistic societies. Matthews and Benjamin. They state, “Each household had the opportunity to benefit by the exchange [of gifts]. Strategy thus came into play, which attempted to determine a parity or dominance over others. The actual gifts exchanged become politically important depending upon who gave and who received them...Households gave gifts to determine who were their friends and who were their enemies. The fundamental relationship between one household and the other displayed either amity or opposition. If there was amity, the households were allies or covenant partners who had a common self-interest.” V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin, *Social World*, 121.

<sup>205</sup> For the connection between humiliation nakedness and physical defacing, see the section below on רום and שפל.

<sup>206</sup> Where one sits denotes the status of their position. For example, rulers sit in seats of honor (1 Sam 2:8). Naboth is seated as the head of the assembly (בֵּרֶאשׁ הָעָם), a place of honor from which he will be publicly deposed (1 Kgs 21:12). Again, we see honoring as a means of depose people. Also, Jeremiah calls YHWH's throne glorious (קְבוֹד, Jer 14:21; 17:12). The exact opposite of a seat of glory is sitting on the ground (Jer 48:18).

<sup>207</sup> It should be noted, however, that in some cases, popular support might force the hand of superiors to elevate others to a position of honor (1 Sam 18:1–10 in the MT and LXX<sup>A</sup>).

## Summary

In short, the root כבד seems to carry much the same sense as it does in English with regard to the realm of human social activity. It describes an important or prestigious position that one is accorded in a familial, political or religious context, as is, for example, a father, king or deity, to mention three examples. But it also describes appropriate recognition that those in such positions expected from their peers or inferiors in the form of praise, gifts and deeds. Not to do so was to declare that they are “unimportant,” which appears to be such a great offense in certain contexts as to warrant severe punishment, whether in families or in international discourse. It also describes the greater social esteem or prestige given to a person based on their success, economic or military. Ideally, those of good character were to be esteemed, though often the wealthy were, despite their wickedness. If כבד characterizes those people who were important, then קלל characterizes those who are unimportant or become so.

### 2.1.2 Inconsequential, unimportant, insignificant, trivial: קלה, קלל<sup>208</sup> and בזה

As C. A. Keller has notes, the “semantic development [of קלל] is opposite in every respect to that of *kbd*.”<sup>209</sup> The root קלל appears in all of the Semitic languages with the basic meaning “be small, light,”<sup>210</sup> and it occurs 128 times in the Hebrew Bible in all

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<sup>208</sup> It is disputed whether קלל and קלה II go back to a common bilateral root. Bergsträsser believes קלה II is a biform of קלל. G. Bergsträsser and W. Gesenius. *Hebräische Grammatik* (Hildesheim: G. Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962). G. Bergsträsser, *Hebräische Grammatik*. (2 vols.: Leipzig. 1918–29); contra H. Botterweck, “Der Trilateralismus im Semitischen” *BBB* 3 (1952): 40–5. Also Marböck believes that Botterweck has gone too far. Marböck, “קלה *qll*,” *TDOT* 13:32. The matter, which has not been adequately resolved, is complicated by how one understands *qll*’s relationship to the adjective *qālqāl* (“smoothed,” “polished”), verb *qlql* (“whet,” “shake”) or *hitqālqāl* (“be shaken”). Possibly they derive from an independent homonymous root *qll* II. In any event, there is much semantic overlap between the roots.

<sup>209</sup> C. A. Keller, *TLOT* 3:n.p.

<sup>210</sup> C. A. Keller, *ibid*. Also see J. Scharbert, “‘Fluchen’ und ‘Segnen’ im AT,” *Biblica* 39 (1958): 8–14; H. C. Brichto, *The Problem of “Curse” in the Hebrew Bible* (SBLMS 13; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical literature and exegesis, 1963), 118–99. For the details relating *qll* in Semitic along with its relevant more thorough statistics in the Hebrew Bible, see J. Scharbert, *TDOT* 13:37–38.

major stems, except the hophal; and scholars largely agree that the basic meaning of the root is “to be light.”<sup>211</sup> An overview of the roots shows that it can describe the fast movement of animals or humans (Hab 1:8; Isa 5:26). It can also denote something that is “lightweight, small, insignificant, minor, despicable.”<sup>212</sup> In this sense, it stands in antithetical opposition to כבד. Thus, as Keller summarized the root, it refers to (a) physical lightness and insignificance (e.g., Gen 8:8, 11; Jonah 1:5), (b) insignificance of a matter or task (Exod 18:22; 1 Kgs 12:4, 9f.; 1 Sam 18:23; 2 Kgs 3:18; 20:10; Prov 14:6);<sup>213</sup> (c) low status on a scale of value (1 Kgs 16:31; 2 Kgs 3:18; Isa 49:6); (d) frivolity (Jer 6:14; 8:11); (e) and, especially, scornfulness (Gen 16:4f.; 1 Sam 2:30 // *bzh* “to despise”; Nah 1:14; Job 40:4; 2 Sam 6:22 // *שָׁפַל* “lowly”; 2 Sam 19:44; Isa 8:23; 23:9; Ezek 22:7).<sup>214</sup> It is this last definition that Keller believes should be emphasized, especially with respect to the piel. And in constructions with the preposition לְ it means “to be easier” (Exod 18:22, hi.), “to be swifter” (2 Sam 1:23; Jer 4:13; Hab 1:8), “to make lighter” (1 Kgs 12:4, 9–10 // 2 Chr 10:4, 9–10, hi.) or “to be too insignificant” (Isa 49:6, ni.).

In addition to “swift,” the qal can mean “to lessen” or “to diminish” in the intransitive sense (e.g., Gen 8:8–11, with regard to flood water). This meaning is applied to social values, “to be or to decrease in position, to be(come) of little importance or to be diminished in esteem.” For example, Job describes himself as קָלַל (Job 40:4) before YHWH, that is, inconsequential in comparison to God. Likewise, the pregnant

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<sup>211</sup> J. Scharbert, *TDOT* 13:37–38.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Also see קָלַל in 1 Samuel 18:23.

<sup>214</sup> The emotive component does not refer to how the individual of low status feels, but how “despised” they are in their position.

maidservant Hagar considers the barren Sarai קלל (Gen 16:4–5), meaning that she is “discredited”<sup>215</sup> or “disrespected.”<sup>216</sup>

Even more significant is the root’s use in the judgment on the family of Eli, which we explore in much greater detail in a future chapter. In 1 Samuel 2:30, YHWH tells Eli that because he did not honor (כבד) God (i.e., he despised YHWH as insignificant [בזה]),<sup>217</sup> Eli’s house will become insignificant (תקלה) in comparison to the house of the one whom YHWH would establish (קום) to replace him (v. 35).<sup>218</sup> That is, because he did not treat YHWH as important, Eli’s ancestral household would be diminished in honor or “become insignificant” in at least three respects. First, God would not only reduce the lifespans of individuals but the number of them as well (vv. 31–33). Second, it would lose its honored position of ministering before YHWH and be replaced by one that was faithful to YHWH (vv. 35–36). Lastly, his house would lose wealth and become economic dependents of the new faithful, priestly household that YHWH’s would choose to serve him and his anointed one (vv. 32–33, 35). As we will see again,

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<sup>215</sup> J. Scharbert, *TDOT* 13:38.

<sup>216</sup> Wenham translates the term “looked down on her,” which basically agrees with our suggestion. G. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC 2; Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1994), 2.

<sup>217</sup> Low social position is often associated with rejection or being “despised” (cf. שפל // בזה in Mal 2:6). The servant of Isaiah 53:3, for example, is despised (נבזה) and “forsaken by men” (ותירלו אישים) and hides his face to avoid the gaze of others. The people “do not consider him” (ולא תשקנהו). He has become a social nothing. Michael Grisanti states, “Verb forms of *bzh*...signify undervaluing someone or something, i.e., ‘to accord little worth.’” M. A. Grisanti, “בזה,” *NIDOTT* 4:630. Likewise, H. Wildberger states that “In Jer 33:24, Yahweh complains that there are those who ‘disdain’ his people so much that they no longer consider his people a people” (also see 2 Kgs 19:3 = Isa 37:3, Ezek 35:12). They continue, “These passages concern, then, the slander that Israel must bear because its worth as God’s people is not recognized. Yet one may assume that *nʕ* was also used in Israel to speak of the denigration of a people in a very general sense.” He further notes that Rib-Addi complains to the pharaoh that the ruler of Byblos is disdained because of his military weakness (EA 137:14, 23 with Akk. *naʾūšu*). H. Wildberger, “נאץ *nʕ* to disdain,” *TLOT* 2:n.p.

<sup>218</sup> The word picture present here is “diminishing” someone versus “causing someone to rise up.”

“diminishing” often had multiple dimensions: reducing to low position and esteem, diminishing economic status of client, and making a household barren.<sup>219</sup>

Sometimes קלל can be likened to death, perhaps because honor was so central to one’s social existence that its loss was akin to death. The prophet Nahum declares, “YHWH has commanded concerning you: your name will not be perpetuated (לֹא-יִזְכָּר) any longer. I will cut image and cast image off from the temple of your gods. I will make your grave (קִבְרְךָ), because you are worthless (קִלְוִיָּה) (1:14).” Scharbert, commenting on this passage, states, “Someone who has lost honor has lost all social significance (*qallôtā*) and deserves nothing more than the grave.”<sup>220</sup> We will see this association between קלל and death time and gain our discussion.

Of the 11 occurrences of קלל in the niphal, only one means “swift” (Isa 30:16; perhaps Ezek 8:17). Otherwise, it retains the value of “to be easy” (Prov 14:6, knowledge for the wise; 2 Kgs 3:18, for YHWH to defeat Moab; 2 Kgs 20:10) or “to be trivial” (e.g., 1 Kgs 16:31) or by extension “to treat carelessly” (Jer 6:14; 8:11, the wound of Israel).

The concept of triviality, however, is relevant to our discussion about honor, as it denotes one’s social status. In 1 Samuel 18:23b, David asks if it is a trivial matter (הַנִּקְלָה) for him to become the son-in-law of king Saul, because he [David] is a poor man (אִישׁ-דָּל)<sup>221</sup> and of little account (הַנִּקְלָה). In fact it is a weighty matter, due to Saul’s status,

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<sup>219</sup> The concept presented here is very close to having one’s “name blotted out (מִזְחָה שֵׁם),” which entails the loss of an ancestral line and is akin to a loss of existence. See our discussion below under שֵׁם.

<sup>220</sup> J. Scharbert, *TDOT* 13:38.

<sup>221</sup> David in our view is not literally poor. In fact the Bible depicts his family as wealthy. See McKenzie’s comments on the phrase זָבוּר הָיִל in 1 Samuel 16:18 and following (cf. 1 Sam 9:1). S. L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57–59. It is, however, another issue to afford the dowry a king might demand, as the eighth son in his family. Possibly it is the case, as McKenzie believes, that David had become poor, as his brothers would have taken the lion’s share of the inheritance. Ibid, 60. In any event, self-deprecation is an acknowledgment of one’s inferior position and, hence, one’s unworthiness to receive a gift from a (graceful and generous) superior. The same self-abasing language appears when Saul offers Merab to David as a wife (1 Sam 18:17–19, “Who am I, who is my clan, and who is my father in Israel that I could become the son-in-law of the king?”). This later

because he is of much lower relative social standing, especially since David is not rich enough to afford a marriage gift befitting of a king's son-in-law. Demonstrating the relationship between wealth and prestige, David can only afford a dowry in the form of a great military victory over the king's enemies (v. 25). What honor David lacked economically could be made up with honor on the battlefield for the king. While the king's offer was ostensibly to honor David, it was really a ruse to destroy him, much as Hunan suspected of David's gift. Also, we have already seen the connection between כבוד and military success.

As with כבוד, the root קלל also refers to *perceived* esteem or position. In 2 Samuel 6:22, when Michal accuses David of belittling himself (a sarcastic use of כבוד)<sup>222</sup> in the full view (לְעֵינֵי אֲמָהוֹת שָׂבָדָיו) of his maidservants, he replies that he will lower (יִקְלֶהוּ) himself further in his own eyes (בְּעֵינָיו). It is obvious that the repetition of the word “eyes” in the passage to represent perception communicates that honor (or all social esteem) is an estimation by self and others.<sup>223</sup> First, what is significant is that שָׁפַל and קָלַל are used as synonyms and are antithetical to Michal's sarcastic use of כבוד in verse 20. Thus, קָלַל is a type of lowering, a loss of כבוד, coupled with the double use of “eyes” to communication the estimation of a person, not just their social rank or position. Ironically, despite such actions, those same maidservants will honor (כבוד) him (over Michal's father).

Among three occurrences of the pual, one means “swift” (Job 24:18) and the other two mean “cursed” (Isa 65:20; Ps 37:22), as קלל does when paired with “blessed.”

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account found in LXX<sup>a</sup> and possibly 1Q Samuel still preserves the sentiments we have seen in the Michal account.

<sup>222</sup> See McCarter who follows Crüsemann. P. K. McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 186. F. Crüsemann, “Zwei alttestamentliche Witze. 1 Samuel 21 11–15 und II Sam 6 16.10–23.” *ZAW* 92, no. 2 (1980): 215–27.

<sup>223</sup> It is likely that קלה is used in this way in Proverbs 12:9: “Better to be inconsequential [יִקְלֶהוּ] and to have a slave, than to be think of oneself as important [יִתְקַבֵּד] and lack food.”



We will discuss the concept of curse and blessing more fully when we treat the piel and קללָה, which will be relevant to our understanding of Deuteronomy 28.

The hiphil of קלל has several meanings: “to lighten” the burden of a task (Exod 18:22; 1 Kgs 12:4, 9, 10 // 2 Chr 10:4, 9, 10), YHWH’s punishment (1 Sam 6:5) and the weight or cargo (Jonah 1:5). It also denotes actions that treat people in higher positions with dishonor. In Ezekiel 22:7 children treat their parents dishonorably: “Among you, father and mother are treated with as insignificant (הקלל), the resident alien is oppressed (עשו בעשק), and orphan and widow are wronged (הוננו).”<sup>224</sup> Demonstrating the seriousness of treating one’s parents as insignificant, such actions were deemed a capital offense (e.g., Exod 21:17).

When YHWH is the subject of the verb, he is lowering people who are in high, privileged positions. Isaiah 23:9 states, “YHWH of hosts has planned it: To defile the loftiness (גאון) of all honored things (צבִי),<sup>225</sup> to make insignificant (קלל) all of the honored of the earth (נִכְבְּדֵי-אֶרֶץ).” Additionally, one’s pride or the things that symbolize high status are brought down to Sheol (Isa 14:11, הוֹרֵד; 1 Kgs 2:6, שִׁבְתּוֹ). The same is true in Isaiah 8:23: “...like in the former time he made the land of Zebulun and Naphtali inconsequential (הקל), but in the last [time], he will restore the glory (הִכְבִּיד) of the way of the sea...” Many translations render the verb הִקַּל as “contempt,” (e.g., NRSV, NASB) which certainly could be the sense. The idea of “contempt” seems to us to be the effect rather than the cause. Wildberger translates the passage, “brought humiliation”

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<sup>224</sup> Similarly, see the root קלה in Deuteronomy 27:16.

<sup>225</sup> The noun צבִי (“beauty”) is the quality of places or objects associated with honor and position. For example, YHWH will destroy the objects that beautify the rich and powerful in Isa 28:1–4. In 2 Samuel 1:19, the שָׂרֵי צָבִי יִשְׂרָאֵל refers to Saul. Here it explicitly paired with כָּבֵד.

(similarly, NIV and NLT).<sup>226</sup> That is to say, Zebulun was contemptible, because it was reduced to being of little account.<sup>227</sup>

One can argue that there is an allusion to death once again. That is, being defeated and oppressed was greatly humiliating, and is depicted as the death that accompanied defeat. In Isaiah 9:1 the people are “walking in darkness” (הַחֲלָכִים בְּחֹשֶׁךְ) or “living in deep darkness” (יֹשְׁבֵי בְּאֶרֶץ צִלְמָנוּת). Path from captivity is the way of כְּבוֹד. The underworld in Mesopotamian literature is a place of Cimmerian-type darkness, as Sheol (the pit or death) appears to be in the Hebrew Bible (Ps 88:7; 143:3; Job 17:13; 24:17; 38:17; Isa 5:14–30; 59:5–10; Lam 3:6; Ezek 32:7).<sup>228</sup> And as we have seen above, what is honored (in high position) is brought down to Sheol.

In any event, even 2 Samuel 19:44 that appears to rest on the numerical understanding of קָלִל likely refers to being “slighted” or treated insultingly: “The People of Israel answered the people in Judah, ‘We have ten shares in the king, and in David we have more than you. Why have you treated us with contempt (קָלִיל).’” With the reference of ten tribes, Keller<sup>229</sup> understandably sees the usage of קָלִיל as numerical (i.e., “few [in number]”). Israel, however, is clearly insulted that Judah would be first to honor David (τί τοῦτο ὑβρισάς με).<sup>230</sup> The tradition of the LXX views the situation this

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<sup>226</sup> H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12* (Continental; Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 385.

<sup>227</sup> Otto Kaiser translates the passage: “As in the past he brought shame upon the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, so later he has made glorious the way of the sea...” O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (OTL 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. compl. rewritten; London: SCM Press, 1983), 203.

<sup>228</sup> Wildberger notes that אֶרֶץ צִלְמָנוּת (land of darkness), is another way of referring to the underworld. H. Wildberger, 395. Michael Fox commenting on Proverbs 2:18 states, “The underworld is a land of silence, darkness, marginal existence, and liminal consciousness. The dead are at best in a condition of honorable repose (Isa 14:18). At worst, they are in a state of disgrace, rot, and discomfort (v 19), a condition due to lack of proper burial, not death itself.” M. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; Doubleday: New York, 2000), 122. Also see D. K. Stuart, *Exodus* (vol. 2; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 255.

<sup>229</sup> C. A. Keller, *TLOT* 3:n.p.

<sup>230</sup> Possibly the statement is a double entendre.

way, “We are more firstborn than you (πρωτότοκος ἐγὼ ἢ σὺ). Indeed, in David we are above you (γε ἐν τῷ Δαυιδ εἰμὶ ὑπὲρ σέ).” That is, Israel is older and larger, thus, they hold a preeminent place and should not have been slighted. They should have been treated according to *pride of place*.<sup>231</sup>

The piel of קלל is most significant for our discussion about how those in low social positions are viewed and treated. Scharbert notes that the piel has the sense of to “make small, deprive someone of their stature or importance (through words or actions), make contemptible.”<sup>232</sup> Socially speaking, Keller notices that the piel’s declarative and factitive functions are identical and “to declare someone ‘light,’ i.e., despicable, insignificant, meaningless, means nothing other than to make the person despicable (in contrast to the more estimative *bzh* ‘to scorn, disdain.’”<sup>233</sup> Thus, one could not only treat people in low position with contempt (Lev 19:14, the blind and deaf),<sup>234</sup> but those who have fallen on hard times. When Shimei “curses” (קלל) David in 2 Samuel 19:22 (21), he is not pronouncing execration from the gods, but publicly belittling the deposed king by hurling insults and stones at him (though see 1 Kgs 2:8). Nehemiah 13:25 provides another example of beatings and verbal “cursing” (i.e., “abuse,” קלל) that came along with public belittling for crimes. One could also belittle those in much

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<sup>231</sup> R. P. Gordon and McCarter see קלל as a corruption of קבול (LXX πρωτότοκος; cf. OL). R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (LBI; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Regency Reference Library, 1988), 262–263. P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 9; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 419. A. A. Anderson differs in this regard, but understands קלל as “to treat with contempt.” A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1989), 233 and 239.

<sup>232</sup> J. Scharbert, *TDOT* 13:59.

<sup>233</sup> C. A. Keller, *TLOT* 3:n.p.

<sup>234</sup> The LXX translates this as κακῶς ἐρεῖς, “to speak badly about.” Closely related is the translation “blaspheme” (Lev. 24:14, Lit., καταρσάμενον, “one who curses”). Both examples, however, should be understood as one disparaging a person for their low position or not treating someone with the respect their higher position deserves, respectively. Thus, for instance, when Eli’s sons are accused of קלל, they are belittling God in his house. Scharbert states, “they are to blame for the inability of the pilgrims to take God and the sanctuary seriously,” J. Scharbert, 59.

higher positions (Exod 21:17; Lev 20:9, mother and father; Lev 24:11, YHWH's name).<sup>235</sup>

The latter category was an egregious crime, so to denigrate one's parents or YHWH merited death, as we have seen.

We should underscore the seriousness again of becoming "insignificant." Like the *qal*, losing honor is "synonymous for the Hebrews with the loss of existence."<sup>236</sup> And for this reason, it is no surprise that *qal* is sometimes associated with death. Keller adds that "if one wants nothing to do with some people and therefore wants to 'put them down,' one does not just insult them but curses and reviles them."<sup>237</sup> This intermingling of life and death is seen in the interplay between *qal* and *brk*.

The verbal forms of *qal* and *brk* appear opposite each other only six times (Gen 12:3; Ps 37:22; 62:5; 109:28; Prov 30:11), five times in the *piel*, the nominal roots *q-l-l* and *brk* appearing opposite each other ten more times (Gen 27:12; Deut 11:26, 29; 23:6; 30:1, 19; Josh 8:34; Zech 8:13; Ps 109:17; Neh 13:2). In many instances, "to bless" someone is to cause a person to receive well-being, success, fertility and superiority. Abram is promised to become a great nation (*וְאַתְּשֶׁךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל*)<sup>238</sup> and blessed with honor, that is, a great name (*וְאַתְּבְּרַכְּהָ וְאֶתְּנָתְּהָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל*).<sup>239</sup>

This same complex of ideas is associated with "blessing" and "curse" in Deuteronomy 28 on a national level, though expressed through individual households.

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<sup>235</sup> Dishonoring YHWH's name is usually translated "curse" (LXX καταράσθαι) or "blaspheme" (Lev 20:9, LXX ακαθῶς εἶπεν). Also see a similar use of *qal* in Isaiah 3:5: "...youth will act arrogantly to the elders, and those of low position [*qal*] to the honorable position [*brk*]."

<sup>236</sup> C. A. Keller, *TLOT* 3:n.p.

<sup>237</sup> J. Scharbert, *TDOT* 13:39.

<sup>238</sup> As Nahum Sarna states, Abram will be "great in number and significance." N. Sarna, *Genesis* (JPS; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 89.

<sup>239</sup> To have a "great name" refers to essence of being. "The promise means not only that Abraham will acquire fame but also that he will be highly esteemed as a man of superior character." N. Sarna, *Genesis*, 89.

For their obedience to YHWH's commandments, YHWH places them in an honored position, a pre-eminent position (וַיְהַנֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עָלֵינוּ עַל כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ). This position entails being the recipients of every type of fecundity (v. 4, relating to crops, livestock, children, etc.; cf. v. 11-12). In addition, they are given military and financial superiority (vv. 6-7, 10, 12). Essentially these blessings are divine life-giving gifts.<sup>240</sup> Commenting on Genesis 12, von Rad states, "The substance of Yahweh's blessing in the Old Testament is predominantly a material increase in life, especially in the sense of physical fruitfulness (Gen 1:22; also below Deut 28:66)."<sup>241</sup> In fact, as we have seen in Deuteronomy 28 and will continue to see, it is not unusual to see a tie between blessing and honor in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>242</sup>

Conversely, disobedience brings about covenantal curses (v. 15, הַקְלָלָה), which entrails the loss or destruction of all of the life-giving blessings that were promised above (v. 18, 20, etc.).<sup>243</sup> After chronicling in great detail the loss of fecundity, superiority (military and financial), health, etc., Deuteronomy 28 states: "Your life will

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<sup>240</sup> The outward display of special position is a frequent purpose of gifts. If the giver is a superior it demonstrates the bestowal or maintenance of a special relationship with the one who is to receive it, as in these passages (Israel is the one called by YHWH's name). If the giver is an inferior, they seek to show deference to a superior to forge or maintain a relationship. Abigail gives David a "blessing" (in the form of food) to ward off his anger (1 Sam 25:27). In the passages she calls him "lord" fourteen times. Note that "blessing" is often seen as a gift of some type of wealth: Naaman and Elisha (2 Kgs 5:15, Jacob and Esau (Gen 3:11) or Balaam and Israel (e.g., Num 24:7). Also, the blessings on Jacob by Isaac and Israel by Balaam involved honor (Gen 27:29; Num 24:7). To withhold a public gift from a superior not only demonstrates a lack of respect, but insults them (i.e., 1 Sam 10:27, men refuse to bring Saul a present because they do not believe he can save Israel. It is said that they "despised" (בִּזָּה) him, that is, they did not esteem him to be sufficient for such respect.

<sup>241</sup> G. von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Rev. ed, OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 159. Also see N. Sarna, *Genesis*, 89.

<sup>242</sup> While we express some reservation with the following view, we should note that Hamilton equates "making one's name great" in Genesis 12:2 with the promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:9. Thus, Abram is seen as a regal figure (cf. 17:6, 19; 23:6 [אֱלֹהִים]). Scholars identify these latter texts in Genesis as P and not J. See V. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 372.

<sup>243</sup> Speaking about בְּרָכָה formulas in Northwest Semitic texts, Josef Scharbert has noted that when referring to humans, בְּרָכָה pertains to "long life, descendants, prosperity, success, and power. The Passive participle of the basic form connotes the possession of powers to bestow happiness and promote life." J. Scharbert, "ברך brk בְּרָכָה bless," *TDOT* 2:283.

hang (in doubt?) before you, and you will fear night and day. And you will have no assurance of your life” (v. 66). Among these curses YHWH will cause Israel descend to the lowest status (v. 13, לְרֹאשׁ וְאַחֶה תִּהְיֶה לְעַבָּד) or even becoming complete outcasts (“they will be unwanted slaves,” v. 68). As we will see when we take a deeper look at this passage in chapter 3, the loss of superior status entails many facets of human life: military, economic, political, familial, to name some.

Using this complex of themes of honor, wealth, etc., we can identify other instances of “diminishing” that help us to identify the social values of texts where קלל is understood implicitly. We find in 1 Samuel 2:30 that because Eli did not כָּבֵד YHWH, his ancestral house and own household would become קלל, which entailed a loss of position, wealth and progeny. While the same language is not used of Saul’s house, note how DtrH describes the crimes and fates the northern royal and priestly houses: (1) Both households commit a similar, serious crime against the cult (1 Sam 2:12–17; 15:15); (2) both lose the possibility of an eternal house (1 Sam 2:30; 13:13–14a); (3) one who will be after YHWH’s heart that will take his place (1 Sam 2:35; 14:14b; cf. 1 Sam 15:28); (4) almost all the descendants of both houses are killed by the sword (1 Sam 2:31; 1 Sam 31; 2 Sam 4:7); (5) the one whom YHWH chooses is given an eternal house because of their heart and concomitant actions (1 Sam 2:35–36; 2 Sam 7); (6) the remaining heir is left to eat at the table of the one who takes his place (2 Sam 2:36; 2 Sam 9:7);<sup>244</sup> and (7) the priest who takes Eli’s place serves David and Solomon (1 Kgs 4:4). In fact, both of the cases follow the pattern is adumbrated in Hannah’s prayer: the one in an high position will be replaced by the one in a low position (2 Samuel 2). In any event, both houses are

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<sup>244</sup> In Lamentations 1:11, “social lightness” (זלל) or worthlessness is equated with beggar status: “All the people groan searching for bread. They sell treasures for food...look how worthless (זלל) I have become.”

diminished in number, wealth and high position for sins against the cult.<sup>245</sup> Thus, even when the word קלל is not used, the complex of ideas present in a text can alert us to the social dynamics at play.

We need not retrace our steps to discuss various nominal forms. We need only to note that we find the same meanings for the adjective קל ("swift(ly)," 2 Sam 2:18; Amos 2:15) or קלל ("despicable," Num 21:5). Additionally, קללה ("curse,")<sup>246</sup> has the same meanings at we have seen.

In summary, the analysis above demonstrates that, when speaking in social contexts, כבוד is roughly equivalent to: "to be(come) important, of high rank, highly esteemed or highly regarded." In the imperative, it can mean to "praise, show respect for." Though in not every way, the use of כבוד accords well with the English usage of "honor."<sup>247</sup> Conversely, קלל means "to be(come) unimportant, lightly esteemed, scorned (for being of low position)." Thus, it should be seen as a diminishment of כבוד. Also, קלל does have some commonalities with shame (e.g., being of low esteem), but unlike the English concept of shame, the term seems to lack an emotive component,<sup>248</sup> except that the person of low position is contemptible. Because the word does not primarily have a person's self-reflection on their low state, that does not mean that a people who had lost honor did not feel terrible about their lot in life. It is just that these terms focus on position or the estimation of others, rather than reflecting on the emotions associated

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<sup>245</sup> Similarly, see Isaiah 16:14, "...the glory [כבוד] of Moab will be diminished [נקלה], despite its great multitude. Those who remain will be few and weak."

<sup>246</sup> J. Scharbert, *TDOT* 2:41.

<sup>247</sup> C. Soanes and A. Stevenson, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2nd ed; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), n.p.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*, s.v. "Shame."

with being in such a position. If anything, the emotive experience seems to be more associated with a term like *בוש*, which only appears once opposite *כבוד*.

Lastly, the value of *כבוד* does seem to have been critical. First, its loss was often compared with death. Secondly, in certain cases, treating honored people as trivial (parents or YHWH) was severely punishable. In the case of Eli's household, it was the reason to destroy the position, economic viability and existence of his household. Lastly, after being deposed by Samuel, Saul was desperate to be "honored" by Samuel.

### 2.1.3 The Lofty and the Low: *רום* and *גבה* versus *שפל* and *שחה*

As we have shown, *קלל* contains the concept of diminishing social rank, status or esteem that affects every facet of human society: economic viability, international and domestic political life, religious life, and familial relationships. The roots *גבה/רום* and *שפל/שחה* function much the same way. We will mostly focus our discussion on *רום* and *שפל*, and only comment on synonyms throughout.

Despite the fact that the verbal roots *גבה* and *רום* are synonyms whose forms appear alongside each other in a number of contexts (the verbal roots *גבה* and *כבוד* never appear together), their derivatives do (Ps 24:8; 145:11–12; Prov 18:12; 1 Chr 29:12),<sup>249</sup> and the various verbal and nominal forms of *רום* and *כבוד* appear together ten times (with *כבוד* once), many times in the context of praise.<sup>250</sup> Otherwise, we see statements like Proverbs 4:8: "Esteem her [wisdom] and she will exalt (*רום* pol.) you; she will honor (*כבוד*, pi.) you, if you embrace her" (similarly, Ps 57:6, 11; 108:5; 112:9; 113:4; Neh 9:5). "Raising up" would be the opposite of *קלל*, diminishing honor.

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<sup>249</sup> For example, we see *כְּבוֹד* paired with forms like *גְּבוּרָה* ("might"). Psalms 145:11–12, the people will see the glory (*כְּבוֹד*) of YHWH's kingdom and tell of his might (*גְּבוּרָה*).

<sup>250</sup> Interestingly, the roots *קלל* and *שפל* only appear together in one verse: "I will make people esteem less (*קלל*) than this. I will be abased (*שָׁפַל*) in my own eyes, but I will be esteemed (*כבוד*) by the maid servants about whom you spoke" (2 Sam 6:22).



So, positions of esteem are “high places.” Ecclesiastes 10:6 states, “The fool is placed in many high places (בְּמָרוֹמִים)...” In fact, one of the most popular honorific titles of YHWH (though with a synonymous root) is “Most High” (עֶלְיוֹן). Therefore, positions of honor are described as ones that are high, and people ascend to them. God asks Jeroboam, “Did I not raise you up (הִרְיִמֹתִיךָ) from among your people and make you a prince?” And those who are in such places deserved to be treated accordingly. Like כָּבֵד, the polel and qal stems of רוּם can be used to mean “to praise,” that is, to publicly acknowledge a person of superior standing or estimation, usually for his or her great acts. In Isaiah 15:1, God’s name is praised (רוּם, pol.) for his wonderful deeds (also Ps 18:46 [qal]; 21:14 [qal]; Ps 31:1 [pol]; etc.).

The same elements play out in the so-called Song of Hannah, which we will explore in greater depth in chapter 4. First, the element of praise is expressed in terms of רוּם: “My heart exults in YHWH, my strength is exalted (רוּם, pol.) in YHWH...” Secondly, using the raising-lowering contrast, she likens honoring to being raised (עָלָה, hi.) to life (חַיָּה) and losing honor as being sent down (יָרַד, hi.) to Sheol (v. 6). The same ideas are echoed in verse 8 where YHWH “raises up the poor (מִקְיָם) from the dust, the needy he lifts (יָרִים) from the ash heap;<sup>251</sup> to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor (וְנִשְׁבָּא כְּבוֹד וְנִחְלָם).” Located between these statements in verse 7 is the connection between honor and wealth: “YHWH takes away wealth and gives wealth; he brings low and raises up (מִשְׁפִּיל אֶת-מָרוֹמָם).” Additionally, the rich and the poor exchange positions: the rich are impoverished and become client class (v. 5). Lastly, as we saw in the house of Eli, the house full of children will be gutted. In short, this passage summarizes many of

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<sup>251</sup> Driver notes that the place of dung “accumulates outside an eastern town or village, and on which beggars sit, asking alms of passers-by, and, by night, often sleep.” S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel* (2nd rev. and enl. ed.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Alpha, 1984), 26. Cf. R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 80.

the socio-economic connections that we have seen with the pair **קלל** and **כבד**, though in terms of **רומ** and **שפל**.<sup>252</sup>

The association between societal position and the honor one expects is brought together in YHWH's coming judgment. In Jeremiah 13:15, YHWH instructs rulers not to be haughty (**אַל־תִּגְבְּהוּ**), but "to show deference to him" (Lit. "give him glory," **תִּתְנוּ כְבוֹד**), as he is bringing death and destruction (v. 16). Thus, he instructs his prophet, "Say to the king and queen mother, take a lowly seat (**הִשְׁפִּילוּ שֵׁבִי**), for your glorious crown has come down (**יָרַד**) from your head" (also Ezek 21:26). The same can be seen in Isaiah 2:11: "The eyes of the haughty [**גִּבְהִיּוֹת**] will be brought low [**שָׁפַל**], the pride [**רומ**] of mortals will be humbled (**שָׁהָה**). YHWH alone will be exalted [**שָׁנַב**] on that day" (also 2 Sam 22:28; Ps 18:28). YHWH also brings the lofty low (**וְהַגְבִּיהִים יִשְׁפָּלוּ**, Isa 10:33). In a majority of cases, the idea of "being low" is between the haughty and low (e.g., Isa 2:11–12, 17; 10:33; 57:15; Ps 138:6; Job 22:29; 40:11; Prov 16:19; 29:23; Eccl 10:6; Dan 4:34; 5:19, 22).

It bears noting here that, though the roots **כבד** and **שפל**<sup>253</sup> appear opposite each other only twice in the Hebrew Bible (2 Sam 6:22; Prov 29:23), they can function as conceptual opposites, as we have shown in Hannah's song. Why these roots do not appear with each other is difficult to say, except that Biblical Hebrew tends to prefer to preserve semantic contrasts like heavy / light or high / low, etc. instead of heavy / low. Yet they describe the same social phenomena socially and economically. Also, we might note that **רומ** and **שפל** seem to have a more emotive component to them than the former

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<sup>252</sup> The same type of interplay can be seen between the root **גבה** and **שפל**. Ezekiel 17:22 says, "Thus says the Lord YHWH, 'I will remove the turban, I will lift off the crown, things will not stay the same. Make high (**בָּגַה**) what is low (**שָׁפַל**), and bring down (**שָׁפַל**) what is high (**בָּגַה**).'" For similar notions, see Psalm 75:8 and especially Ezekiel 21:31 where the symbols of honor are removed as a sign of lowering a person's high status. In both passages, it is God who ultimately lowers a person's status and raises another's.

<sup>253</sup> The roots **קלל** and **שפל** only appear opposite each other once.

pair. For example, we often see **הָוִי** meaning “arrogant,” an attitude consistent with high position or the claim one makes for esteem. In any event, the importance of this fact will become clear in our analysis with other roots like **הָוִי** that only once appears opposite **כָּבֵד**.

Before moving on, however, we should note that many of the words and actions that denote social “lowering” are not necessarily belittling in themselves. The same words and actions that denote denigration can also denote deference. That is to say, many expressions and actions when willingly performed by an individual, even in some types of mourning, signify respect for a superior.<sup>254</sup> One suffers dishonor when he or she fails to recognize adequately the position of a superior or challenges that person through a contest (military, challenge-riposte, etc.) but loses.

Regarding self-lowering, for example, Mephibosheth falls on his face (**וַיִּפֹּל עַל-פָּנָיו**), doing obeisance (**וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה**) and calling himself a servant (**עַבְדְּךָ**, 2 Sam 9:6ff.; also Gen 50:18; Lev 9:24; 1 Sam 25:23-24). Later Mephibosheth likens himself to a “dead dog’s head” (**אֵל-הַכֶּלֶב הַמֵּת**).<sup>255</sup> Each of these actions publicly demonstrates to David and others that Mephibosheth, a descendent of Saul and possible rival for the kingship, is issuing no challenge David’s claim to the throne.

Conversely, the same actions or words that demonstrate willing deference to a superior take are employed to humiliate the loser in a contest.<sup>256</sup> The psalmist in Psalm

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<sup>254</sup> Roland de Vaux only mentions only one action, putting one’s hands on one’s head, that signifies both shame and mourning (2 Sam 13:19; Jer 2:39). R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: It’s Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Livonia, Mich.: Dove Booksellers, 1960), 59.

<sup>255</sup> As McCarter opines, “It is not that a dog is vile or contemptible...but insignificant.” That the dog’s head is “dead,” is an even greater expression of inconsequentiality. Thus, he can say, “What is your servant?” McCarter, *II Samuel*, p. 261. Also, see the Lachish Ostrakon 2:3b–4, it says, “Who is your servant, (but) a dog, that my lord has remembered?” (cf. 5:4; 6:3).

<sup>256</sup> David likens himself to a dog to Saul (1 Sam 24:14), as part of his defense of innocence that he is trying to overthrow Saul.

86:9 declares that the defeated nations will be forced to do obeisance before YHWH (וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְפָנָיו) and “to honor his name” (וַיִּכְבְּדוּ לְשִׁמְךָ), namely, the psalmist’s enemies will praise YHWH when he defeats them. Likewise, the nations will bow before Israel in Isaiah 60:14: “The descendants of those who oppressed you will come to bow (שָׁחוּ) and show deference (חָוָה) before the soles of your feet, all of those who reviled your lowliness (מִנְאָצִיךָ), they will call you the city of YHWH, Zion, the Holy One of Israel.” The same can be said with the use of “servant.” In a context of battle, “servant” is the future role of the defeated combatants, not expression of humility as we have seen with Mephibosheth. Goliath taunts: “If I prevail against him and kill him, then we will become your servants” (1 Sam 17:9). Lastly, comparing another person to a dog is always insulting in the Hebrew Bible. Continuing with the same example, Goliath, insulted that Israel was belittling his reputation as a great warrior by sending out a untrained boy to face fight him, asks David, “Am I a dog...?” (1 Sam 17:43). When Shimei publicly bitterly disparages (קָלַל)<sup>257</sup> the fleeing King David as a murderous usurper (2 Sam 16:7),<sup>258</sup> Abishi refers to Shimei as a “dog” and threatens to behead the Saul loyalist for depreciating the king (v. 9).

Mourning presents another situation of self-lowering whose rituals parallel acts of social lowering.<sup>259</sup> For example, one might ritually tear their robes when mourning,

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<sup>257</sup> C. A. Keller notes, “*qll* pi. is the most common verb for mocking and reviling speech by which one who feels uncertain or weak seeks to elevate oneself above another. Thus the texts mention ‘making despicable, execrating’ as an action and reaction of plundered slaves who attempt to distance themselves from their oppressors in this manner, as is the case with Shimei (2 Sam 16:5ff.).” C. A. Keller, *TLOT* 3:n.p.

<sup>258</sup> Rebellion against one’s superior (especially the king and YHWH) was an egregious act. For example, Nabal accuses David of sedition and slights him for it: “Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? Today there are many servants breaking away from their masters” (1 Sam 25:10). It is no wonder that in his efforts to clear David of any hint of wrongdoing in the case of Saul’s demise, Dtr twice depicts David as having the opportunity to kill Saul without doing so.

<sup>259</sup> The subject of mourning is too vast to explain in our given context. Not only are there many reasons for mourning in the Bible, but also explaining the meanings behind all of the rituals of mourning would take us too far afield. It should suffice to say that among the major (often interrelated) reasons for

symbolizing making oneself naked (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 13:31; 2 Sam 15:30; Ezra 9:3),<sup>260</sup> while being stripped naked by another is humiliation (Hos 2:5).<sup>261</sup>

Defacing the body is another form of lowering. When willingly performed by a person or group on themselves, it expresses humility. But when done forcibly by another person or group, it is an act of humiliation and belittling. Shimei, for example, flung dust at David (שִׁמְעִי בָּעָפָר), but when one mourns they put dust on their heads (2 Sam 1:2). The same seems to be the case with the cutting of beards (comp. 2 Sam 10:4 and Jer 48:37).<sup>262</sup>

Where one sits is likewise indicative of this contrast. Thus, people humble themselves when mourning by sitting on the ground (Job 2:13; 1 Sam 2:8; 28:23), but defeated when humiliated are forced to sit on the ground (Isa 3:26; esp. 47:1; Jer 48:18). The elders of Zion in Lamentations 2:10 mourn by sitting on the ground: “The elders of Daughter Zion sit on the ground in silence, they have dust on their heads. And they put on sackcloth, the young girls of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground” (also see Ps 35:14; 38:6; 107:39 with שָׁחָה). And as we have seen in Hannah’s prayer, those who are delivered rise from the dust, and this appears to have some association with death.

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mourning are: shame (2 Sam 13:19); crisis or distress (2 Kgs 6:30; 19:1; Esth 4:1); repentance (2 Kgs 22:11) and death (2 Sam 13:31). It stands to reason that in the cases for repentance and crisis, appeals to God for deliverance must be made with the proper demonstrations of respect for the deity. Likewise, even some rituals of death might be connected to honor. Following Herbert Brichto, Philip King and Lawrence Stager maintain that the commandment to honor one’s mother and father (Exod 20:12; 21:15, 17; Levi 19:3) was to continue past death. P. J. King and L. E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 42. H. C. Brichto, “Kin, Cult, Land, and Afterlife—A Biblical Complex,” *HUCA* 44 (1973): 27–33.

<sup>260</sup> R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 59.

<sup>261</sup> D. R. Edwards states, “In general, the tearing or removal of one’s garments publicly displayed despair, mourning, or loss of status.” D.R. Edwards, “Dress and Ornamentation,” *ABD* 2:233.

<sup>262</sup> De Vaux notes that the self-mutilation of shaving the beard had a religious significance, though it is lost to us today. R. de Vaux, 61. It would be too much to say that such an act only communicated self-abasement, especially since the Torah forbids it (Lev 19:27–28; Deut 14:1). But it seems, given the vast number of acts and expressions that communicated both in vary contexts, we seem to be able to say at least that much.

Echoing this sentiment, Psalm 143:3 states, “For the enemy has pursued me, he crushed my life to the ground. He has caused me to sit in the darkness like those forever dead” (similarly with the root שָׁחַח in Isa 29:4; cf. also Lam 3:6).

In addition, the high and low points of the body seem to represent the person and are associated with acts of shaming and humility. Putting dust on the head makes sense, as the head and feet symbolize places of honor. One has their head anointed with oil as a sign of honoring someone (Ps 23:5), especially when placing them in an esteemed position (2 Kgs 9:3). Of course, someone showing deference to another does obeisance by lowering their head to the feet of a person of greater status. Such ritualized associations persisted into the Common Era (Luke 7:44–46). With regard to the feet, one removes their sandals to show deference to a higher up (YHWH, Exod 3:5), but has their sandal removed by another when publicly shamed, (Deut 25:9) or in mourning (2 Sam 15:30; Ezek 24:17, 23; Mic 1:8).<sup>263</sup> Lastly, hiding or covering one’s face can also be done because of mourning (2 Sam 19:4), deference (Isa 6:2) or out of shame (Lam 1:8).<sup>264</sup> In fact, “shame is said to cover one’s face” (e.g., כָּסָה כְּלִמָּה פָּנָי, Ps 69:8). As we can see from this sample survey, the positions, actions and statements expressing self-lowering (showing deference or mourning) are a direct parallel to those where one’s claims to

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<sup>263</sup> What the actual rite signifies is difficult to discern, but what is clear is that the ritual accompanying the unwilling levir’s refusal to raise up a son for his brother denote public shaming, as spitting in another’s face is a ritual act of shaming (Num 12:14; note the reference to כָּלַם). The willing removal of one’s sandals, however, indicates deference. We would even point out that Moses and Joshua had to remove their shoes when standing in the presence of YHWH (Exod 3:5; Josh 5:15). These were likely signs of reverence to YHWH. C. Meyers remarks, “Moses removes his shoes at this holy place as an indication of respect.” C. Meyers, *Exodus* (The New Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 53. She also notes in her discussion that shoes are not mentioned in the priestly attire of ancient Israelites, Muslims remove their shoes before entering a mosque and members of priestly families take off their shoes before they deliver the priestly benediction in the synagogue.

<sup>264</sup> Hiding one’s face from another is also a sign of shaming or rejection (e.g., Ps 13:2; Ps 27:9; Isa 53:3).

equal or higher status are repudiated in conflict. These are often represented as high and low, though not exclusively.

Returning to our overall discussion of the high and low semantic domain, we can note that even when explicit vocabulary is absent (e.g., גבה, כבוד, רום, etc.), the concepts of “high” and “low” denote positions of high and low esteem. We only have room for one example here that we will explore in greater depth in a later chapter. We turn back to Deuteronomy 28 where we find the summary statement: “If you will obey YHWH your God, diligently observing all of his commandments which I am commanding you today, YHWH will place you *high above* all nations of the earth.” Israel is clearly placed in a position of superiority, as the content of the blessings confirms, economically and militarily. What confirms that honor is implied is that the same basic words appear in Deuteronomy 26:18–19 where honor vocabulary is explicitly used: “YHWH has promised you today to become his treasured people, as he said to you: for keeping his commandments, *for setting you above* all the nations that he has made, for praise (לְתִהְיֶה־לָּהּ), fame (לְשֹׁמַיִם), glory (לְתִפְאָרֶתָּהּ)...”<sup>265</sup> Their high position is their honor. The same idea of Israel’s position of superiority is expressed in the closing of the blessing section of chapter 28: “YHWH will make the head (רֹאשׁ) and not the tail (זָנָב) only *to be on top* (לְמַעַל) and *not the bottom* (לְמַטָּה), if you obey the commandments of YHWH your God...” (v. 13). The opposite concepts are expressed in becoming the tail in the curse section (v.

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<sup>265</sup> NLT renders the passage: “He will make you greater than any other nation.” The NAB translates it: “He will then raise you high in praise and renown and glory.” Note that תִּפְאָרֶת (“beauty,” “glory,” “honor”) is associated with honor in a number of texts. One prominent text is Isaiah 60:13, “The glory (כְּבוֹד) of Lebanon will come to you together...to beautify (לְיָפֵאֵר) my holy place. I will honor where my feet rest (אֲכַבֵּד).”

44). Or low position can be seen in becoming a slave (v. 48) or being rejected slaves in Egypt (v. 68).<sup>266</sup>

Once again we see that the social values of honor (high position) or unimportance (low position) are sometimes not present in a context where the explicit vocabulary “honor” and “shame” vocabulary do not appear. Why the characteristic vocabulary is not chosen in a given context, however, is up for speculation. Perhaps other vocabulary was chosen for more dramatic reasons (e.g., the head-tail contrast) or because it simply was not needed for those who were culturally accustomed to the meanings of such imagery. Nonetheless, the text communicates the concepts of “honor” and “shame” by using the high and low semantic contrast. Whatever the reason, in our study of the formulation of the various covenants of the Bible, we need to be sensitive to what could be varied expressions that communicate these values. And as we have said in our introduction, perhaps one of the reasons why scholars have failed to study the intersection between honor and shame is due to the lack of explicit vocabulary in these contexts.

### *Summary*

To this point, we can see that again *רום* and *שפל* or the high-low semantic domain do not represent honor and shame, at least in the English conception. Like *קלל* and *כבד*, the primary focus is on high and low positions; thus, *שפל*, unlike the English word

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<sup>266</sup> The same can be said of the life of Joseph, whose life experiences a number of “ascending” and “descending” and episodes, which are nothing more than his gaining and losing honor. When his narrative begins in Genesis 37, Joseph is the most honored of Jacob’s sons, but his brothers throw him into a pit to await execution. Then Joseph descends into Egypt as a slave, and again is thrown into the “pit” (i.e., jail) after being falsely accused of rape. His honoring is denoted by ascending out of the pit to escape death, to the highest position in Potiphar’s house, to the highest position in the jail, and finally to the second highest position in Egypt. Only at the very end of the narrative, though, does Joseph explicitly say, “You must tell my father about all of my honor in Egypt...” (Gen 45:13a), which describes his position in the high court.



“shame,” does not carry with it a *heavy* emotive component. In certain instances when **רום** and some of its forms mean “haughty” or “proud,” such self-estimation does seem to carry with it an emotive element. And there might be some notion of “lowliness” or even “humiliation” implied by **שפל** itself. For example, Isaiah 2:9 states, “The haughty eyes of mortals (**עֵינֵי גִבְהוּת אָדָם**) will be brought low (**שָׁפַל**), the pride of humans brought down (**וְנִשְׁתַּל רוֹם אַנְשִׁים**)—do not forgive them” (cf. 2:11, 17; 5:15; Jer 48:29). YHWH does not appear to be concerned with “lowering” those who are in high positions merely because they are in high positions, but because they have become arrogant, and for that he will strip their arrogance from them (e.g. Dan 4:30–36). We hold, however, that in most cases, status is primarily in view and one’s sentiments secondary. So, like **קלל** and **כבד**, the roots **רום** and **שפל** point to the social reality of status and esteem, which are connected to economic, military and even personal contexts like childbearing.

Moreover, these values appear to be a key part of Israelite thinking about society and life. First, the loss of “high position” is depicted as going down to Sheol in many cases, and we have seen that regaining or attaining high positions is portrayed as “bringing to life.” Secondly, these values touched every aspect of Israelite life: moral decisions, family roles, political position, economic life, military accomplishment and Israel’s covenantal relationship with YHWH.

#### 2.1.4 Being valuable, great and having a great or valuable name: **שם** and **גדל**, **יקר**

Among the other “honor” roots in the Hebrew Bible, a few more are worth discussing: **גדל** and **יקר**, especially used with **שם**. We will examine these various roots alone and how they are used in combination. As we will see, there is much overlap.

The root יקר (lit., “precious, valuable”) can signify being in a privileged or honored position.<sup>267</sup> For example, in Isaiah 43:4, we find the phrase, “Because you are valued (יקר) in my sight, honored (כבוד); I love you, I exchange people for you, a nation for your life.” Because Israel is special to YHWH, she has an honored place as his people; he will use them as a ransom. Perhaps this same idea is meant in 1 Samuel 18:30 where David, having gained great military success against Israel’s enemies, wins him a “valuable name” (וייקר שמו; 1 Sam 18:30). The exact idea seems to be that YHWH has given David an unparalleled reputation based on his immense success.<sup>268</sup> We find the same concept operating in Psalm 45:10, “The daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor (בִּיקְרוֹתֶיךָ; LXX τῶν ἡμετέρων) at your right hand stands the queen in the gold of Ophir.”<sup>269</sup> The daughters of kings are in a uniquely privileged place, as is anyone who sits at the king’s right hand.

The various verbal, nominal and adjectival forms of גדל are too vast to cover in any depth, but due to their importance, we should give an overview of them here, particularly with respect to some honorific uses. In short, Jenni says that the qal of גדל

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<sup>267</sup> Aramaic prefers to use יקר to mean “honor,”<sup>267</sup> and we see it used in this sense in books like Esther, Daniel and Chronicles. See C. Westermann, “כבוד,” *TLOT* n.p. For example, reflecting the use of כבוד in texts like Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:6, wives were commanded to honor their husbands (יִתְּנוּ יָקָר לְבַעְלֵיהֶן). King Ahasuerus’ asks what “honor and greatness” (יָקָר וְגִדּוּלָה) had been given to Mordecai for his faithfulness (Esth 6:6–7, 9, 11). Daniel is promised great wealth and honor for interpreting dreams, but position is also in view (Dan 2:6), as it was for Joseph (Gen 45:13; see numerous examples Dan 4:27, 33; 5:18, 20).

<sup>268</sup> This exact idiom is unique, as it appears in no other Northwest Semitic inscription or Hebrew inscription, as far as we have been able to ascertain. The closest biblical parallel is in 1 Kings 1:47 where the king’s servants wish Solomon to have a “better name than David” (יִשָּׁב אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־שֵׁם שְׁלֹמֹה מִשֵּׁמֶךָ). The root טוב is associated with high value (e.g., זָהָב טוֹב). Conversely, Nehemiah was threatened with a שֵׁם רָע, is perhaps best understood as a “worthless name” (Neh 6:13; comp. 2 Kgs 2:19).

<sup>269</sup> We see no reason to follow Budde and Kraus to correct קרא with קרה (“to meet”). Two more associations with honor are noted here. The gold precious gems of Ophir were considered high quality. See D. W. Baker, “Ophir (place),” *ABD* 5:26. Lastly, being seated at a ruler’s right hand is the highest place of prestige. See H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 452.

means “to be significant, mighty, valuable.”<sup>270</sup> It describes the greatness of an outcry (Gen 19:23), of wealth (24:35; 26:13), of height (Ezek 16:7), of power (Num 14:17), of mourning (Zech 12:11) or suffering (Job 2:13). The comparative use with *gadol* can describe surpassing another. For example, Solomon excelled others in riches and honor (2 Chr 9:22). In fact, “to be(come) great” is to be(come) wealthy (Gen 24:35; 26:13). In many instances, it means to “grow up” (Gen 21:8, 20; 25:27; 38:11, 14; Exod 2:10, 11; Jdg 11:2; 13:2; etc.).

When applied to social contexts, *gadol* expresses a complex of ideas: high value, high position, abundant wealth, great power, good character and honor. For example, Saul’s life was “great” (i.e., precious); thus, David would not kill him (1 Sam 26:24; 1 Sam 2:26). In Genesis 41:40 Pharaoh promotes Joseph to second in the kingdom and tells him that “...only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you (רַק הַכִּסֵּא אֲנִי גָדוֹל מִמֶּךָ).” In addition, power is also in view of David who grows more and more powerful because of YHWH’s presence (2 Sam 5:10). Such victories give David a name like the important or powerful leaders of the earth (2 Sam 7:9). In Esther 9:3–4 the Persian officials backed the Jews because they feared Mordecai, who had become “powerful” (גָּדוֹל). His fame spread (וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ הוֹלָךְ) throughout the provinces (Esth 9:4), as he grew more and more powerful (הוֹלָךְ וַיִּגְדֹּל).<sup>271</sup> Ideally, just character is not to be separate from someone who is “great,” thus, YHWH is praised because he vindicates the poor (Ps 35:27), he saves (40:17; 70:5), and he has great thoughts (92:6). We can even follow these same themes in the use of the piel.

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<sup>270</sup> E. Jenni, “גָּדוֹל *gādôl* great,” *TLOT* 1:n.p.

<sup>271</sup> See J. D. Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 121.

While the causative sense of the piel can have the sense to “rear, cause to grow” (2 Kgs 10:6; Isa 1:2; 23:4; 44:14; 49:21; 51:18; Jonah), it can also mean “to honor” as in “to promote to a high position.” In Esther 3:1, King Ahasuerus “promotes” (גָּדַל) Haman and placed him in a seat above (וַיָּשֶׁם אֶת־כִּסֵּאֵוֹ מֵעַל) all the officials with him.” Such position was associated with great wealth and progeny about which one could boast (5:11). Lastly, in Joshua 3:7 we see the causative use: YHWH “will make Joshua great” in battle in the view of all Israel, so that they would reverence (יִרְא) him like they did Moses (4:14). So by YHWH giving military success to Joshua, he would win the esteem of Israel that he was YHWH’s chosen leader. Likewise, in 1 Kings 1:27, 47, Solomon’s servants wished for his throne to grow greater (וַיִּגְדַּל אֶת־כִּסֵּאֵוֹ מִכִּסֵּאֲדָוִד) than David’s. This usage brings together many of the aspects we have seen, as the throne symbolized a king’s honor, authority, wealth might, etc. (cf. 1 Chr 29:12, 25; 2 Chr 1:1). As we have seen with Haman also—and we could multiply these examples—high position was tied with power, prestige, wealth and ideally good character (which in Haman’s case did not apply).

The declarative use of the piel means “to declare great” (Psa 34:4; 69:31). The evaluative denotes “to consider great (Job 7:17). Such evaluation can lead to boasts of greatness. In fact, the hithpael can mean to show one’s greatness (here power, Ezek 38:23 // קִדַּשׁ), as an act of boasting (cf. Isa 10:15; Dan 11:36f.).

The hifil can mean “to make something great, to prove oneself great” (e.g., Gen 19:19 [God’s הִפְסִיד]; 1 Sam 12:24; Isa 9:2 [שִׁמְחָה]; 28:29 [הוֹשִׁיעַ]; Ezek 24:9 [מְרוֹדָה]; Joel 2:20f.; Amos 8:5 [value of a shekel]). In Psalm 126:2, הִגְדִּיל signifies YHWH superior might in securing salvation. It can also mean to “brag” (e.g., Jer 48:26, 42; Ezek 35:13; Zeph 2:8, 10; Psa 35:26) or perhaps even “to be arrogant” or “deal with arrogantly” (Ps 55:12; Dan

8: 11, 25). As we have seen, then, in several cases, when it is used of self-estimation it can be close to the use of **גָּדוֹל**.

The adjective **גָּדוֹל** is mostly used to express size or magnitude (over 100 times).<sup>272</sup> It describes the size of cities (Jon 1:2), the wilderness of Sinai (Deut 1:19), the Euphrates (Gen 15:18), an army (2 Kgs 7:6), the temple's outer court (1 Kgs 7:9).

The adjective is also used substantively in a merism to describe positions of importance (opposite positions of **קָטָן** "unimportance" (e.g., 1 Kgs 22:31; Ps 115:13; Job 3:19). Thus, various people are described as **גָּדוֹל**: Mordecai (Esth 9:4), Naaman (2 Kgs 5:1), and Job (Job 1:3) and YHWH (Ps 96:4). We need not cover **גָּדֹל** and **גְּדוּלָּה**, as they have the same sense that we have seen. Having discussed both **יָקָר** and **גָּדֹל**, we are ready to turn to understanding **שֵׁם**, which as we have seen bears direct relation to our understanding of the Abrahamic and Davidic promises.

The noun **שֵׁם**, can signify a person's name, but it can also denote the reputation of a person<sup>273</sup> and operate as a metonym for "fame." Following Besnard and Pedersen, A. S. van der Woude notes, "The result is the usage of *šēm* in a dynamic sense as the sum of a person's deeds and accomplishments, means and reputation."<sup>274</sup> Thus, it signifies "fame," "honor," "reputation," (Num 16:2) "renown." We have seen this in

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<sup>272</sup> M. G. Abegg, Jr., *NIDOTTE* 1:824.

<sup>273</sup> Contra Fichtner, Bietenhard, Pedersen, we would agree with A. S. van der Woude that names did not represent the "essence" of that which was named. Citing O. Grether, he notes, "Apart from the fact that the meanings of some proper names were incomprehensible even to the Hebrews (esp. foreign names and ancient PNs), the name 'often did not represent a designation of the essence of its bearer even among primitive peoples, but emphasized only an individual distinguishing characteristic of its bearer, memorialized the parents' attitude toward the birth of the child named or an important political event at the time of birth, or, as a theophoric PN, made a statement concerning God.'" A. S. van der Woude, *TLOT* 3:n.p. O. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im AT* (BZAW 64; Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1934, 2. Similarly see A. Ross, "**שֵׁם**," *NIDOTTE* 4:149. For a contrary view, see J. Fichtner, "Die etymologische Ätiologie in den Namengebungen der geschichtlichen Bücher des AT," *VT* 6 (1956): 372; H. Bietenhard, "**ὄνομα ὀνομάζω ἐπονομάζω**," *TDNT* 5:253. *BHH*, 1284; and J. Pedersen, 245.

<sup>274</sup> van der Woude, *ibid*, n.p. A.-M. Besnard, *Le mystère du Nom: Quiconque Invoquera le Nom du Seigneur Sera Sauvé* (Lectio Divina 35; Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), 22ff.; J. Pedersen, 245–59.

Deuteronomy 26:19 in the phrase *לְהַזְכִּירָה וּלְהַפְאִרָה* (similarly Jer 13:11; Zeph 3:19–20 // *תְּהַלֵּלָה*). The same is said of YHWH in Psalm 102:22, “to recount in Zion the fame (*שֵׁם*) of YHWH and his praise (*תְּהַלֵּלָהוּ*) in Jerusalem” (also Ps 66:2).<sup>275</sup>

Likewise, *שֵׁם* can be used in conjunction with *גָּדַל* and its derivatives. To have a “great name” (*שֵׁם גָּדוֹל*) or “making a name” (*עָשָׂא שֵׁם*) is an honorific statement. Generally speaking, when applied to YHWH, the phrase speaks of the renown YHWH gains from his military superiority. For example, in 1 Kings 8:42, Solomon states, “for they will hear of your great name, your mighty hand and your outstretched arm when [a foreigner] comes to pray at this temple” (cf. 1 Chr 6:32). The same fame through battle is promised to David: “I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all of your enemies before you, and I will make for you a name (*וַעֲשֵׂתִי לְךָ שֵׁם*)<sup>276</sup> like the name of the great ones that are throughout the earth” (2 Sam 7:9; fulfilled 2 Sam 8:13).

Apparently some attempts to earn fame were ill-gotten and became for the biblical writers a major turning point in divine-human relations. The unified nations in Genesis 11:4 (J) work together to build a city and tower to heaven (*וַיִּבְנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַּשָּׁמַיִם*)<sup>277</sup> and “make a name for [themselves]” (*וַיַּעֲשֵׂה-לָנֹו שֵׁם*).<sup>278</sup> As a result, YHWH scattered the nations, and in Genesis 12:2 (J) promises Abraham that he make Abraham renown (*שִׁמְךָ*

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<sup>275</sup> The noun *כְּבוֹד* also carries this sense of “reputation” or perhaps “dignity” in Psalm 4:3 where the psalmist laments that his reputation (*כְּבוֹד*) suffers “shame” because of defamatory accusations.

<sup>276</sup> Read with the LXX<sup>BAMN</sup> and 1 Chronicles 17:8. See P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 193. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 248 n. 122.

<sup>277</sup> As Sarna notes, “This expression is actually cliché of Mesopotamian building inscriptions, particularly with reference to ziggurats.” Sarna notes a host of examples. For instance, Gudea says Eninnu’s temple “lies in the heavens;” and Hammurabi is given credit for building a temple “whose top is the sky.” He finally comments that biblical writers consider towers symbols of human arrogance (Isa 2:12–15; 30:25; Ezek 26:4, 9). N. Sarna, *Genesis*, 82–83.

<sup>278</sup> If Isaiah 14:14 is an allusion to Genesis 11, then apparently Isaiah interprets the episode as an attempt to become like the Most High.

וְיִבְרְכוּ בָךְ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחֵת הָאֲדָמָה (וְיִאָּדְדְּךָ לָהּ).<sup>279</sup> Not only that, but the now-scattered clans of the earth would receive blessings or curses depending on their treatment of Abraham (וְיִבְרְכוּ בָךְ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחֵת הָאֲדָמָה). This promise is directly connected to making Abraham a great nation (v.2). Martin Abegg states, “Indeed, the promise given to Abraham to make Israel a significant nation is the very centerpiece of God’s works.”<sup>280</sup> Thus, the importance promised to Abraham is for him and his descendants, as can be seen by the interactions the Egyptians and Philistines have with Abraham, Isaac, Joseph and Israel (Gen 27:29).<sup>281</sup> In this way, Abraham and his household would begin to reach worldwide prestige.

Reputation was a precious commodity to the biblical writers, which also seems to be the case for Hellenistic thinkers. Israel’s sages considered it more valuable than wealth (Prov 22:1; Eccl 7:1). The same could be said for Sirach who taught that “a good reputation lasts forever” (Sir 41:13). And Nehemiah could complain in chapter 6 that his enemies could stop his work by giving him a “bad reputation” or “worthless name” (רַע לְשֵׁם, v. 13), causing him to suffer reproach (לְמַעַן יִתְרַפֵּינִי; cf. ὄνομα πονηρὸν in Sir 6:1). In Deuteronomy, giving one’s wife (and hence her family) a bad reputation through false accusation was punishable by a steep fine (22:14–19).

One’s name (repute), of course, could be based on deeds, character or YHWH’s grace. As we mentioned above, warriors could win a name (great reputation) for themselves as the Nephilim did (הָמָּה הַגִּבּוֹרִים אֲשֶׁר מְעוֹלָם אָנָּשִׁי הָשָׂם; Gen 6:4). David’s fame spread and the nations feared him (פָּתָדוֹ) because of his military exploits over the

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<sup>279</sup> We agree with von Rad that the Abrahamic call story contains an allusion to Babel. von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 160.

<sup>280</sup> M. G. Abegg, *NIDOTT*, 1:825.

<sup>281</sup> As Sarna notes, “he who mistreats you will inevitably incur misfortune...The verb *k-l-l*, referring to the offender’s action, means “to disparage, abuse, cause harm”; *’-r-r*, referring to God’s response, has the much stronger connotation of ‘to place under a ban, to deprive of the benefits of divine providence...’” N. Sarna, 89. See also V. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 37.

Philistines (1 Chr 14:17). The same is said of David's men Abishai and Zeruiah who won great fame for their military exploits (1 Sam 18:30 [וַיִּקְרַע שְׁמוֹ]; 2 Sam 23:18, 22 [לְדָוִד]). Solomon's fame spread to all the nations around (וַיִּהְיֶה שְׁמוֹ בְּכָל-הָעוֹלָם סָבִיב) because of his great wisdom (1 Ki 5:11). Jerusalem and Israel's reputation are connected to YHWH's blessing on them (Ezek 39:13; 16:14; Gen 12:1–3).

"Name" is also akin to קָלַל and the reduction of one's household. As van der Woude states, "Because *šēm* in the dynamic sense signifies a person's vital (one's very existence, the family), material (means, property), and spiritual (fame, honor) aspects, the name can also survive one's death; hence one is concerned for one's name."<sup>282</sup> Thus, the "blotting out" (Deut 7:24; 9:14; Ps 109:13) or "cutting off" one's name (Josh 7:9; 1 Sam 24:21; Ruth 4:10) was akin to non-existence.<sup>283</sup> For this reason, the law made special provisions for men who had died heirless (Deut 25:5–10) or eunuchs who could have no heirs (also later the prophet Isa 56:5). The levir who refused to keep his brother's name from being blotted out, would be publicly shamed when the wife of the dead brother spits in his face and removes his sandal (v. 10). While the full intent of the sandal removing remains unclear, it appears to be a shaming gesture like spitting. Thus, his family would receive the name "family whose sandal was pulled off."

Thus, a person's "name" in ancient Semitic "carried more significance than an identification mark: it was considered to be a description of character or conditions. Having or giving a name was related to, if not a determinative of, one's existence."<sup>284</sup> Thus, Allen Ross can say, commenting on Job 30:8, that "...unknown or dishonorable

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<sup>282</sup> van der Woude, *TLOT* n.p.

<sup>283</sup> Thus, by losing most of their progeny Eli's or Saul's houses would be in danger of having their names blotted out of Israel.

<sup>284</sup> A. P. Ross, "שֵׁם," *NIDOTTE* 4:147. S. Gervitz, "Of Patriarchs and Puns," *HUCA* 46 (1975): 33.



people who were outcasts from the land were children of no name,” and “remembrance is determined by name” (Isa 56:5).<sup>285</sup> For example, in Genesis 6:4, the אנשי השם should be understood as the “men of renown.” Having a name that is remembered signifies existence, while having one’s name “blotted out” or “cut off” is tantamount to non-existence.

### *Summary*

The roots יקר , גדל and שם all express many of the concepts we have seen before. They all refer to high or valued position, power, reputation, esteem, wealth or high self-assessment. Even the merism like גדול and קטן can refer to those in important positions and unimportant positions, like the roots כבד and קלל. Verbal concepts can mean “praise” or “boast,” and honorific associations seem to refer to that which is above. With regard to centrality, we noted that good reputation was more valuable than wealth, and the loss of “name” is akin to non-existence. Even more important to our task, we have seen that to have a “great name” is central to the idea of the Abrahamic covenant and “making a name for David like all of the great ones of the earth” is a critical promise to him.

#### 2.1.5 Miscellaneous “Shame” Vocabulary: בוש I, כלם, and חרף II.

Scholars have long identified various Hebrew roots as denoting “shame” or “shaming,” but among them, three deserve special treatment: בוש I, חרף II and כלם. First, of roots that do not appear to be direct antonyms of our first two semantic fields, they appear in the greatest number<sup>286</sup> Secondly, בוש serves as a good test case for our study of

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<sup>285</sup> A. P. Ross, *NIDOTTE* 4:147.

<sup>286</sup> For example, גדל and גדוץ appear a combined total of 11 times in the Hebrew Bible; קלם come up only 7 times; and נאץ 24 times. With treated the concept of “despising” with בזה above.

“shame” words. Yael Avrahami has recently re-interpreted the word to mean “disappointed,” disputing scholars’ long-standing understanding of the word and, in the process, has challenged the pan-Mediterranean approach to honor and shame in general, namely that the two values should be viewed as a binary pair. Avrahami’s study calls for new, stricter methodological controls where primacy is given to a word’s context, instead of, for example, etymology. Therefore, in this subsection we will briefly outline Avrahami’s conclusions and methodological concerns. Then we will analyze חרף, כלם and finally בוש, using her methodological suggestions, as we find them valuable in avoiding circular arguing, as much as that might be possible.<sup>287</sup> In the end, while we do not think her redefining of בוש is completely unfounded, we believe that her conclusions are too far-reaching, especially as we have seen that certain concepts of honor and shame do operate as binary pairs.

As indicated, Avrahami believes that scholars have misunderstood the meaning of בוש because of the dominance of the social-scientific pan-Mediterranean approach to the Bible, who are best represented by the Context Group; and this is despite a number of dissenting voices in biblical and anthropological circles.<sup>288</sup> Avrahami believes that these scholars, have misunderstood the semantic field of honor and shame terminology for three reasons: (1) anthropologically-minded scholars have approached the subject deductively instead of inductively, allowing themselves to be influenced by

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Meanwhile, בוש and its derivatives (בושה, בושתי) occur 170 times; כלם, כלמה, כלמות appear 69 times; and חרפה, חרף III, חרף II appear 112 times. The root חפר is almost used the great majority of times with בוש.

<sup>287</sup> When we have already determined the meaning of a synonym or antonym of בוש, חרף or כלם, we will allow it to enter the discussion.

<sup>288</sup> From the field of anthropology, Avrahami cites M. Herzfeld, *Honour and Shame*, 139–51; and R. J. Coombe, “Barren Ground: Re-conceiving Honour and Shame in the Field of Mediterranean Ethnography,” *Anthropologica* 32 (1990): 221–38. From within biblical studies, she cites K. J. Chance, “The Anthropology of Honor and Shame: Culture, Values, and Practice,” *Semeia* 68 (1994): 139–51; Also see J. Stiebert’s *Construction of Shame*. Y. Avrahami, 295.

anthropological concerns and comparative philology; (2) they have allowed etymological considerations to influence their meaning of a word instead of its context; (3) they have concentrated on narrative passages, while the lion's share of vocabulary appears in poetry;<sup>289</sup> (4) בּוֹשׁ almost never appears in antithetical parallelism with certain "honor" vocabulary like כָּבֵד, יָקָר, הָדָר;<sup>290</sup> and (5) because בּוֹשׁ is mostly found in lament and thanksgiving psalms, the speaker of these psalms normally requests to "not be disappointed" since he has his trust<sup>291</sup> in YHWH.<sup>292</sup>

Since both חָרַף and כָּלַם appear in parallel with בּוֹשׁ, we will attempt to analyze instance other roots can study them in contexts separate from each other (as much as possible) and study them in their context apart from etymological considerations. In this way, we can more confidently determine their meanings when they appear together, as they do in so many instances. Also, this approach will hopefully keep us from arguing in a circular fashion. That is, we do not want to argue that since חָרַף

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<sup>289</sup> For Avrahami, studying words in poetry has the benefits of understanding a word's meaning "in light of common associations that are demonstrated in word pairs, parallels and clusters of words." Y. Avrahami, 299.

<sup>290</sup> Y. Avrahami, 303. Avrahami's exploration of the synonyms and antonyms of בּוֹשׁ is instructive. First, she notices that בּוֹשׁ is found in synonymous parallelism with the following verbal roots (her definitions): כָּלַם, כִּילְמָה, חֲרַפָּה, עִטָּה חֲרַפָּה, רִיק, שׁוֹב, אַחֲזֹר, חָפַר, כָּלָה, אָבַד, נָדַם and בָּהַל. But what is more, בּוֹשׁ also appears in antithetical parallelism with בָּקַשׁ, קָרָא, קוּה, חָסָה, בָּטַח, יָשַׁע, שָׁמַח, שָׁבַע and opposite various situations that have to do with *mizvot*.<sup>290</sup> Regarding the latter, in Psalm 119 בּוֹשׁ appears with antonyms יָשַׁע, שָׁמַח, שָׁבַע as well as following the commandments of YHWH. This shows that "taken together, these antonyms to בּוֹשׁ in the Psalms portray an experience of reassurance, confidence, and salvation." Y. Avrahami, 303.

Interestingly, she believes that in each of these instances the meaning of כָּלַם is unclear (Ps 35:4; 40:15; 69:7; 70:3). Avrahami says the same thing about each of the 21 instances that these words are paired in the prophets. The problem is that כָּלַם most frequently means "the feeling of being hurt or humiliated" it sometimes means "to be harmed." Y. Avrahami, 301. And because the tradition is too poisoned, assuming this feeling is "shame" is unwise. For her, disappointment can cause shame, but is not tantamount to it.

<sup>291</sup> Y. Avrahami, 302. It is clear, especially from the last item in the list, that all of these roots are not, strictly speaking, antonyms of בּוֹשׁ, but are situations that "prevent it." For example, בָּקַשׁ (to search), קָרָא (to call), קוּה are a plea for divine aid. Y. Avrahami, 303.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 299–300.

appears in parallel with כָּלֵם, and the latter means “shame,” so must the former. Then with that result in hand, circularly argue that since כָּלֵם appears in synonymous parallelism with הָרַף that latter means “shame,” so must the other.<sup>293</sup> We first analyze the poetic contexts of these roots and then prose contexts separately. Lastly, we hope that this method will keep us from inserting modern anthropological concepts.

#### 2.1.5.1 Taunting, insulting, mocking: הָרַף and הָרַפָּה

The verbal root הָרַף and nominal root הָרַפָּה appear a combined total of 58 times in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>294</sup> Using our restrictive search criteria, the qal only appears in wisdom literature. For example, in Proverbs 27:11 הָרַף means “accuse, challenge.”<sup>295</sup> That is, when a child lives wisely, his or her father cannot be accused. Possibly the accusation is against the father’s person or reputation. The same appears to be true of Job 27:6 who claims to be in the right (בְּצִדְקָתִי) and to hold to his integrity (תְּמִימָה; v. 5), despite charges against or challenges to his character.<sup>296</sup> This can be seen in the one usage of the piel. In Nehemiah 6:13, Nehemiah complains that Tobiah was hired to frighten him, so that

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<sup>293</sup> Given our restricted search criteria, there are only 3 passages where כָּלֵם and הָרַף appear together without the root בּוֹשׁ (Jer 23:40; Ezek 36:15; Ps 69:8). There are 5 verses where all three roots appear together (Isa 54:4; Jer 31:19; 51:51; Ps 69:20; 71:13). On the other hand, there are 25 verses where בּוֹשׁ and כָּלֵם appear together (Isa 30:3; 41:11; 45:16–17; 50:7; 61:7; Jer 3:25; 6:15; 8:12; 14:3; 20:11; 22:22; Ezek 16:52, 63; 32:30; 36:32; Ps 35:4, 26; 40:15; 44:16; 69:7; 70:3; 109:29; Job 19:3; Ezra 9:6), but only one instance where the roots בּוֹשׁ and הָרַף occur together (Isa 30:5). By determining the meanings of כָּלֵם and הָרַף, but especially the former, we might understand how בּוֹשׁ is being understood.

<sup>294</sup> The verbal root only occurs 19x in this restrictive context: twice in the qal stem and seventeen times in the piel stem. Eleven of the 19 instances are in poetic contexts.

<sup>295</sup> R. E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, 208.

<sup>296</sup> That character is possibly in view can be seen when הָרַף appears in contexts with שָׁם + נִאֵץ. For example, Psalm 74:18, “Remember this, how the enemy mocks, O YHWH, and a foolish people despise (נִאֵץ) your name” (cf. v. 10). The enemy scorns the reputation of YHWH. Also see our example in Nehemiah below in the context of (שָׁם רָע).

Nehemiah might make mistake (וְהִטְאִהוּ) that would give him a bad reputation and “discredited” him (יִתְרַבֹּזֵהוּ).<sup>297</sup>

Otherwise, the piel has the sense “to insult,” or “despise (as being beneath),” an accusation that one person is beneath another (e.g., // הִגְדִּיל Ps 55:13; // ב + הָלַל Ps 102:9). In most contexts, this involves strength in battle. For example, on two occasions, the enemies of the psalmists taunt, “Where is your god?” (Ps 42:11). The enemies of YHWH were not mocking his existence but accusing him of his inability to save (2 Kgs 18:34; Ps 79:12). Taunting is a way of drawing an enemy into conflict, much as we have seen with Goliath in 1 Samuel 17.

There is also a sense “reviling” or “hating as lesser” involved. For example, in Zeph 2:8–10, YHWH tells Israel that he has “heard the taunts of Moab (תִּרְפַּת מוֹאָב) and derision of the Ammonites (גְּדוּפֵי בְנֵי עַמּוֹן)<sup>298</sup> of the Ammonites.” The enemy was proud (נָאֵץ) and they boasted against Israel (גָּדַל, hif.). The meaning of the idiom תִּרְךָ נַפְשִׁי in Judges 5:18 is difficult to determine with precision, but it appears that Zebulun “mocked his life,”<sup>299</sup> as he joined the tribes in battle.

The remaining examples of the תִּרְךָ in the piel occur in the Book of Samuel, only in the Goliath account in 1 Samuel 17. These instances clearly mean “to mock, taunt,” but they also contains a note of challenge. In 17:10, Goliath taunts Israel, “Today I mock

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<sup>297</sup> It is somewhat unclear what this mistake is, though H. G. M. Williamson understands it as a cultic mistake that would cause Nehemiah to fall out of favor with the priests. H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (WBC 18; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers: 1985), 260.

<sup>298</sup> For example, look at the use of גָּדַל in 2 Kings 19:6, 22. In the passage, it is clear that the King of Assyria is claiming that YHWH cannot save from the might of Sennacherib, as no gods have (2 Kgs 18:33–35). Likely גָּדַל (“to revile”) is being used much the same way as we have seen as בִּזָּה “to despise (as less than).” Also see the use of בִּזָּה and לָעַן in 2 Kings 19:21 and the mocking gesture of sorrow (הִנֵּינִי עֹשֶׂה רֹאשׁ Ps 22:8; 109:25).

<sup>299</sup> Boling translates is similarly with “scorned.” R. G. Boling, *Judges* (AB 6A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 103.

the ranks of Israel” (and presumably her god).<sup>300</sup> The same sentiment is echoed through the passage: “he has surely come up to mock Israel” (v. 25; also vv. 26, 36, 45; Judges 8:15; 2 Sam 21:21; 23:9).<sup>301</sup> Thus, taunting was not only a way of humiliating an opponent (and his gods) after defeating them, but also a way of goading them into conflict by claiming their inferiority.

In short, the verb means to make a negative accusation (often in the form of a challenge) about to a person’s or deity’s character, whether their moral character, as in the case of Job, or his military prowess.

The noun *תּוֹרָפָה* appears in 17 poetic passages and it denotes verbal slander (// *עַל-לִשְׁנוֹ*; Ps 15:3; Lam 3:61–63) that reviling (e.g., // *וַיְדַוֵּךְ* in Zeph 2:8). In many contexts, it is best translated “disgrace, taunt, reproach or insult.” For example, Lamentations 3:29–30 says, “Let [the one waiting on YHWH’s salvation] put his mouth to the dust. Perhaps there is hope. Let him give his cheek to the smiter and be filled with disgrace (*בְּתוֹרָפָה*).”<sup>302</sup> We have previously seen the associations of humility and mourning represented by lowering one’s face to the ground. The noun is associated many actions which we have already identified as insulting: striking the cheek (Job 16:10; Isa 50:6) and pulling out the beard (50:6). The actions in Isaiah 47:1–3 are associated with

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<sup>300</sup> David takes the insult of Israel as being against God (v. 36). Though most commentators prefer to translate *תּוֹרָפָה* as “defy,” the word fails to capture the full sense of the word in context. Perhaps a more accurate, albeit more awkward translation, would be “to mockingly challenge.” Goliath calls out, “Why did have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not the Philistine (*הַפִּלִּשְׁתִּי*), while you are servants of Saul (*עֲבָדֵימָלְכִי*)? Choose a man and let him come down to me.” The mock, and scornful one at that, is the comparison Goliath makes between who he is and who the Israelites are. The aspect of challenge is in the imperative to send someone to fight him.

<sup>301</sup> See Ralph Kline concerning the secondary nature of 17:12–31, 50; 55–58; 8:1–5. R. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 172–75. Similarly see McCarter, though he divides the passage slightly differently. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 306–7.

<sup>302</sup> Similarly see Adele Berlin who translates the passage, “He should put his mouth in the dust, perhaps there is hope. He should offer up his cheek to the smiter, eat his fill of shame.” A. Berlin, *Lamentations: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster: John-Knox Press, 2002), 79.

diminishing honor (though unmarked). Daughter Babylon is ordered to “sit on the dust,” and “[sit] on the ground without a throne,” (v. 1); and in v. 3 she is told that “her nakedness will be uncovered and shame (תִּרְפָּה) will be seen.” Thus the noun is strongly associated with many of the humiliating gestures that we have seen in the previous two semantic domains.

The noun can also be used in connection serious moral violations. In Proverbs 6:32–33, the one who commits adultery “destroys” (שָׁחָה) his life (v. 32) and commits “a wound of dishonor (נִגְעַת־וִקְלָיוֹן),” “his disgrace (וְתִרְפָּהוֹ) that will never be wiped away.” So grave are some actions that shame cannot be removed from the perpetrator.

We have seen several important instances where תִּרְפָּה appears in military contexts. Insults were not just used to coax a foe into battle, as in the case of Goliath, but also to “disgrace” a defeated enemy (Ps 78:66; 79:4). As expected these insults were associated with many other acts of humiliation: YHWH’s temple is defiled (79:1), animals are allowed to eat YHWH’s slain faithful ones (vv. 2–3), Israel suffers taunt and derision (תִּרְפָּה // קִלְסָה), and YHWH is mocked with taunts (חִרְף חִרְפָה [pi.]; v. 12). In Micah 6:16, bearing disgrace is parallel to being an object of horror (שִׁמְהָה) or hissing (שִׁרְקָה), both acts of acts of reviling.<sup>303</sup> The disgrace one felt in defeat was far-reaching. In addition to the defeat itself, Lamentations 5:1ff. demonstrates that “disgrace” can be connected with the losses of defeat themselves: the loss of land and property to outsiders (v. 2), the loss of children and spouses (v. 3),<sup>304</sup> and the loss of economic viability (v. 4). What is worse

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<sup>303</sup> For this sense of this word pair see 1 Kings 9:8; Jeremiah 18:16; 19:8; 49:17 and 50:13.

<sup>304</sup> Childlessness is a state of lowliness, as we have seen with Hannah in which one might be mocked (Sarah; also see the reproach of the women in Isaiah 4:1).

is to be enslaved and by slaves (vv. 5, 7).<sup>305</sup> This is the type of reversal we have seen in the Prayer of Hannah.

It should be noted in both Isaiah and Psalm 79 that the “disgrace” the people suffer from the standpoint of YHWH is a punishment for their sins (cf. Ps 39:9), but from the standpoint of the surrounding nations is for their military inferiority. Thus, YHWH tells Israel not to fear reproach when people revile them (for their inferiority), because he will save them (Isa 51:7f.; Ps 39:). “Disgrace” can even be a metonym for “sin” (i.e., “disgraceful acts,” Hos 12:15; Ezek 21:28).

There appears to be little to no difference in meaning in the twenty-one narrative passages in which תרפה appears.<sup>306</sup> For example, in Genesis 20:23, note the “disgrace” associated with childlessness (הרף + אפך only here and Isa 4:1),<sup>307</sup> or being a slave (5:9). Likewise, תרפה could have the force of “contemptible thing” (marrying an uncircumcised man in Genesis 34:14)<sup>308</sup> or being involved in illicit sexual activity (2 Sam 13:13). In addition, In 1 Samuel 11:2, Nahash intends “to disgrace all of Israel” (תרפה על-כל-ישראל) by gouging out the right eye of defeated Israelites.

In Jeremiah, YHWH’s judgment will cause them to become a “disgrace” wherever he drives them to. In verse 9 the concept compared to becoming a “thing that causes one to tremble (תִּנְיָה),”<sup>309</sup> “a taunting proverb (מִשְׁלַל),” “a cutting remark (שְׁנִינָה),”<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> There is only one example where הרף appears opposite כבוד, Proverbs 14:31. God is honored by those who are gracious to the needy, but disgraced by those who oppress them.

<sup>306</sup> Gen 30:23; 34:14; Josh 5:9; 1 Sam 11:2; 17:26; 2 Sam 13:13; Jer 24:9; 29:18; 42:18; 44:8, 12; Ezek 5:14–15; 21:28; 22:4; Dan 11:18; 12:2 and Neh 1:3; 2:17; 4:4; 5:9.

<sup>307</sup> Hagar had contempt for (קלל) the childless Sarah (Gen 16:4).

<sup>308</sup> For Wenham, this means to make themselves “the butt of adverse comment and ridicule.” G. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC 2; Dallas, TX: Word Books, Publishers, 1994), 312.

<sup>309</sup> It is difficult to determine the meaning of this rare word that is found predominantly in Jeremiah, but it seems to mean “something which makes one tremble.”



and “a curse (קללה).” In v. 10 it is parallel to “an object of cursing (אֶלֶּה),” “a horror (שִׁמְהָ),” “an object to be hissed at (שִׁרְקָה).” Some of these same words appear together in Jeremiah 29:18; 42:18; 44:8, 12. All terms express serious contempt and ridicule for their defeated status. In Ezekiel 5:14–15, the concept of חֲרָפָה is parallel to becoming “something to revile” (גְּדוּפָה) and an “object of instruction” (מוֹסֵר), along with being a “horror (שִׁמְהָ).” Thus, “disgrace” refers not only to an insult (also see Ezek 21:28), but also refers to becoming an object a verbal scorn (Ezek 22:4; Daniel 11:18; Neh 1:3; 2:17; 4:4; 5:9). In Daniel 12:2 חֲרָפָה is synonymous to דְּרָאֹן (“an abhorrent thing”), but is associated with resurrection from Sheol to meet final judgment.<sup>311</sup>

In summary, the verb is a demeaning statement about a person’s ability or moral character. It is especially prominent in contexts of taunting, whether to goad an enemy in battle or to degrade them in victory with an understanding that the person being taunted is inferior to the one taunting. The nouns is associated with the ritualized shaming actions that we have seen in other semantic domains, and used in the same economic, military, or moral contexts. What is unique about חֲרָפָה is that God can suffer it, unlike קלל and שפל. God is never said to lose his “glory,” “diminish,” or “be humbled.” He does suffer reproach, however in defeat.

#### 2.1.5.2 כָּלַם, כְּלָמוֹת, and כְּלָמָה

The Hebrew root כלם and its derivatives (כְּלָמוֹת, כְּלָמָה) appear only 17x in the Hebrew Bible in passages where neither חָרַף nor בֹּשַׁם appear.<sup>312</sup> The verbal forms of the

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<sup>310</sup> The root seems to denote something “sharp, cutting.” When applied to speech the verbal root has the meaning of making a “cutting remark.” In Psalm 64:4 the psalmist’s enemies sharpen (שָׁנְנָו) their tongues like swords; they “nock (דָּרְךְ) bitter words like arrows (חֲצֵצִים דִּבְרֵי מָוֶר) in their bows” (also see Psalm 140:4).

<sup>311</sup> J. J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 393.

<sup>312</sup> The noun כְּלָמָה appears 30 times, כָּלַם 38 times and כְּלָמוֹת once.

root appear 11x out of the total occurrences (6x in the Niphal and five in the Hiphil). While BDB and HALOT lists the primary meaning of these stems as “wound, hurt,”<sup>313</sup> perhaps for etymological reasons, but we would argue that the primary definition for these stems is “to shame,” even outside of the constraints of our approach.<sup>314</sup>

For example, in Numbers 12:14, the force of spitting in the face is hardly a wound, unless that wound is considered more social and emotional. Perhaps “humiliation” or “shame” (LXX ἐντραπήσεται) is the best way to understand the force of כָּלַם, especially with the focus on ritual exile.<sup>315</sup> Again, in 2 Samuel 10:5, the idea of humiliation is implied when Hunan cuts off the beards<sup>316</sup> and exposes the genitals of the men David sent to honor (כָּבֵד) his dead father (cf. 1 Chr 19:5). The same can be said for Ezekiel 43:10–11.<sup>317</sup> “Shame” seems to be the best option, considering iniquities are involved.<sup>318</sup> Lastly, 2 Chronicles 30:15, the priests and Levites felt shame (LXX: ἐντραπήσαν) for their ritually unsanctified state, which caused the postponement of the feast (v. 3).<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> See Wagner for the etymology and meanings in other Semitic languages. Wagner, “כָּלַם *klm*; *kābēd*; כָּלַמָּה *k’limmā*; כָּלַמֻּת *k’limmūt*,” *TDOT* 7:185.

<sup>314</sup> See Wagner, *TDOT* 7:186. He holds that the primary meanings of כָּלַם are “disaster” and “shame.”

<sup>315</sup> Similarly, we find in 2 Thessalonians 3:14 Paul instructing the church with the same vocabulary. He commands the church to have nothing to do with disobedient brother (in essence exiling them from the community) as a form of shame (μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι αὐτῷ, ἵνα ἐντραπήῃ).

<sup>316</sup> See our discussion above; cf. Isa 15:2; Jer 41:5; 48:37. See McCarter about the concept of ritualized castration. P. K. McCarter, II Samuel, 270–71; and Matthews and Benjamin, 104.

<sup>317</sup> The form כָּלַם is a corruption in v. 11 כָּלַם (LXX and Vulgate). Read with LXX and Vulgate.

<sup>318</sup> D. I. Block, *Ezekiel 25–48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 586–87.

<sup>319</sup> S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 948–49; R. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 245.

With regard to the hiphil of כָּלַם, the sense of Judges 18:7 is unclear,<sup>320</sup> but could mean either “hurt” or “shame.” The idea is that Laish was under the aegis of Sidon (צִידוֹן) (יִשְׁכָּבֶת־לָבַטַח כְּנִשְׁפָּט). Therefore, they lived trustingly (לְבָטָח) and “there was no one to shame/hurt (them) in any way,” If we are correct, then “shame” here is a metonym for “defeat.”<sup>321</sup>

In wisdom literature the hifil of כָּלַם seems to connote the position of one who loses a contest, military or otherwise. Job 11:3 is difficult, but likely Zophar is questioning why there is no one to rebuff (hif. כָּלַם) Job who is mocking (לֵעַג) him?<sup>322</sup> The same sense is found in Proverbs 25:8 where a person who hastily brings a matter into contention (evidently based on circumstantial evidence) will lose his legal complaint. In Proverbs 28:7 seems to carry the sense that the unwise son brings public “shame” upon his father or perhaps leaves him open to accusation.

Some sense of “shame” seems likely for Ruth 2:15 where Boaz orders his servants not to “shame” (or perhaps “hurt”) Ruth, since the men might “strike” (נָגַע, v. 9), “humiliate” (כָּלַם, v. 15) and “rebuke” (נָעַר, v. 16) gleaners. Because “striking” is already mentioned in the passage, “humiliate” is a more likely translation. The command to assist the socially defenseless is mandated by biblical law (Lev 19:9-14; 23:22; Deut

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<sup>320</sup> Thus, see the emendations of *BHS*, *HALOT*, *NIV*(?), and Soggin. A. Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1987), 272.

<sup>321</sup> For the adverbial use of כָּבֹד, A.A. Macintosh, “The Meaning of *mklm* in Judges xviii 7,” *VT* 35 (1985): 76. His conclusion, however, is that the phrase means, “to speak with authority,” based on Akkadian and Arabic parallels. Following Cassel and Barthélemy, O’Connell paraphrases the clause: “and, there being no one humiliating (i.e., metonymy of effect-for-cause signifying military harassment that causes humiliation) anything in the land.” R. H. O’Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 479.

<sup>322</sup> See Wagner, *TDOT* 7:188.

24:17–18). As we have seen, those who had fallen into dependent status were considered “unimportant” (cf. 2 Sam 2:30ff.).<sup>323</sup>

There are six passages where *כְּלָמָה* occurs, three of them in poetic passages. More broadly, *כְּלָמָה* in Micah 2:6 refers to the disaster (*רָעָה*) YHWH is about to bring on Israel for their sins (vv. 1–5, 8–9) in the form of a conquering enemy (v. 4). More specifically, *כְּלָמָה* refers to the complete destruction they will suffer (*שָׂדֵד וְנִשְׁדָּנוּ*), the taunt song of their enemies (*וְיִשָּׂא עַל־יָדָם מְשָׁל*), their wailing (which is often associated with being mocked) and the loss of their blessings to their enemies (v. 4). Thus, *כְּלָמָה* functions as metonym for defeat, or better subjugation. Psalm 4:3 is the only place where any of the derivative of *כָּלַם* and *כָּבַד* appear together, and here the psalmist complains that his good reputation (*כְּבוֹד*) suffers disrepute (*כְּלָמָה*) because of false accusations. Lastly, the sense of *כְּלָמָה* in Job 20:3 is difficult, though Zophar appears to be upset that Job’s correction “insults” (*כְּלָמָתִי*) him, which prompts him to answer (*וְרוּחַ מִבִּינָתִי וַעֲנֵנִי*). Each situation seems to imply a type of humiliation, and in the last two cases the humiliated are treated less than their reputation deserves.

The last three examples are in Ezekiel where *כְּלָמָה* describes the disgraced state Israel in economic dependency (34:29), the priests’ loss of honor position of serving YHWH (44:13), and in 39:26 the “shameful deeds” of the people (*מַעֲשֵׂם*).

### *Summary*

The various nominal and verbal forms of *כָּלַם* appears to signify “shame (shameful deeds), embarrassment or humiliation” in military, economic, moral, and social contexts, much as we have seen with other roots that denote a loss of honor. It is associated with

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<sup>323</sup> We have already noted the connections between the loss of honor and barrenness, social dependency and even the threat of having one’s name “cut off.”

military defeat (and the taunts that come with it), becoming economically dependent, committing “shameful” acts, losing an honored position and being stripped naked. Most importantly, however, “shame” can be used as a metonymy for defeat, mainly because it is associated with many of the shaming actions the defeated suffer.

#### 2.1.5.3 I בוש, בושה, בשות

Now we turn toward the root בוש and its derivatives in both poetic and prose contexts, which Avrahami has rendered “disappointment” in most of its occurrences. What is significant about בוש is that it occurs more times than any other “shame” word in the Hebrew Bible, but what is also as noteworthy is that it appears in the greatest frequency with כלם, which we have just analyzed, which suggests that they are a standard pair and synonyms of some sort.<sup>324</sup> Nonetheless, we will proceed as best we can to examine בוש in our restricted sense and then comment on contexts in which it appears with כלם or חרף. Lastly, in this section we will give a summary critique of Avrahami’s position. Our conclusion is that the word is far too rich to translate easily into English and appears to encompass a complex set of emotions describing a low, depleted state of devastation, which connected with shame.<sup>325</sup>

Using our limited search criteria, we find that בוש occurs over 90 times.<sup>326</sup> One of the most frequent contexts in which we find the qal stem is misplaced trust. That is, someone is or fears to be left in a state of בוש for placing their confidence in an

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<sup>324</sup> Commenting on Ezekiel 36:32, Block states, “The frequency with which *bwš* and *k’līmā* are conjoined suggests a standard pair,” D. Block, *Ezekiel* (NICOT, vol. 2; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1998), 350–51.

<sup>325</sup> In fact, a quick perusal of the diversity of words that Avrahami had identified as appearing synonymously or antithetically parallel to this root show just complex of the experiences the word encompasses.

<sup>326</sup> The exact number depends upon some text critical decisions and possible confusions with the roots יבש and באש.

untrustworthy object, person or deity (Isa 37:27; Jer 14:4; 17:18; 48:39). It is not unreasonable to understand בוש as “disappointed,” but not without some nuancing. Isaiah 20:5 says, “They will be horrified and ashamed / disappointed (וַחֲתוּ וְבָשׁוּ), because Ethiopia their hope (מִבְּטָח) and Egypt their object of boasting (תִּפְאָרָתָם).” the people will be “terrified and בוש” (וַחֲתוּ וְבָשׁוּ).<sup>327</sup> Possibly בוש should be understood as “disappointed” in one’s failed object of trust. Still, it does appear opposite an honor word here.<sup>328</sup> Egypt was their prideful boat that would ensure victory (Isa 4:2). Moreover, the fate of Egypt in verse 4 is shameful exile (עֲרֹת מַצָּרִים).<sup>329</sup> It would be too difficult to parcel out “disappointment” from other emotions, especially the shame of a defeated object of boasting. It appears that the word has a component of shame and deep devastation.<sup>330</sup>

Likewise, in the prophecy against Tyre in Isaiah 23:4, the city should be בוש because the sea, acting as her fortress (of wealth) will soon fail. She will be emptied of all of her honor: she is the exultant city (עֲלִיזָה); the bestower of crowns, whose merchants were princes (שָׂרִים) and whose traders were honored throughout the earth (נִכְבְּדֵי-אֶרֶץ). YHWH plans “to defile what is majestic, everything that is glorious” (לְחַלֵּל אֵין קֶלֶבֶד), to make insignificant everything that is honored of the earth (לְהַקְלִי כָּל-נִכְבְּדֵי-אֶרֶץ). Even if disappointment is in view—and residents of Tyre would be very devastated in defeat—

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<sup>327</sup> This pair appears ten times in the Hebrew Bible, sometimes in parallel (e.g., Jer 14:4) and sometimes in in what appears to be a hendiadys, though it is difficult to render.

<sup>328</sup> See Isaiah 60:13 where the glory of Lebanon (קְבוֹד) will beautify (פָּאֵר pi.), and YHWH will glorify where his feet rest (כָּבֵד pi.).

<sup>329</sup> Even if this phrase should prove to be a gloss (Duhm, et. al.), the addition of a shame phrase demonstrates that a later editor was sensitive to the thrust of the passage.

<sup>330</sup> Even when not appearing in parallel to an honor word, its context is filled with references to honor. In Isaiah 49:23, those who wait on YHWH’s promise to be honored by kings will not be בוש (kings will guard them, queens will be their wet-nurses; the kings and queens will bow before them and lick the dust from their feet). So, while disappointment is somewhat in view, it cannot be said that other concepts are absent. *The word is nearly always used in contexts of extreme depravation, abject conquest or humiliation.* Indeed, that בוש, whose meaning we have established, is found in parallel to it more than any other word is telling.

their resulting state of losing this pride of place in the world would not be devoid of some notion of shame.

This same thinking applies to false trust in idols. People who trust in idols will be “turned back” (נָסָגוּ אַחֲזֹר)<sup>331</sup> and will be utterly put to shame (נִבְשָׁה בַשָּׂת, Isa 42:17). The same is especially true of Jeremiah 48:13 where the objects of power and honor are destroyed (also the scepter and glorious staff, v. 17). Possibly these instances connote “disappointment,” but again, they can perhaps more easily be understood as some type of humiliation for having trusted in something that, though filled with honor and strength from a human standpoint, were too weak to save.

Moreover, one should not contrast the object of trust and the bad state one ends up in too much. Trusting a false idol (one that cannot protect), for example, is “shameful” in itself. In Hosea 4:19 idol worship is linked with adulterous behavior, which is considered disgraceful (עֲשֵׂתָהּ נִבְלָה in Deut 22:21). Thus, Hosea accuses Israel of loving קְלוֹן (disgrace)<sup>332</sup> or exchanging their honor for dishonor (כְּבוֹדָם בְּקְלוֹן אֲמִיר) in Hosea 4:7. The same can be said for the “shame” false prophets bear (Zech 13:4). In all three examples

<sup>331</sup> The idiom נָסָגוּ אַחֲזֹר appears eleven times in the Hebrew Bible, five times in the context of חֶרֶף, כָּלֵם or בּוֹשׁ (similarly see אַחֲזֹר שׁוּב [hiph]). The phrase almost always occurs in the niphal and hophal. It denotes: “to retreat, be forced to retreat” (Ps 6:11; Isa 59:14; Jer 46:5), “be driven back” (2 Sam 1:22), “be unfaithful/desert” (Ps 44:18; 50:5; Jer 38:22). Note the parallels Psalm 35:4 and 40:15 (cf. Ps 70:3) where we have the same concepts, though alongside other shame roots, which strengthens the connection to shame:

Ps 40:15	יָחַד מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשִׁי	וַיִּתְּפְרוּ	נִבְשָׁה
	חֲפָצָי רַעֲתִי	וַיִּכְלְמוּ	יָסָגוּ אַחֲזֹר
Ps 35:4	מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשִׁי	וַיִּכְלְמוּ	נִבְשָׁה
	חֲשָׁבִי רַעֲתִי	וַיִּתְּפְרוּ	יָסָגוּ אַחֲזֹר

In each context, יָסָגוּ אַחֲזֹר is parallel to חָפַר or כָּלֵם, respectively. That is to say, to turn Israel’s enemy back is synonymous for making them flee in battle or “putting them to shame,” signifying Israel’s salvation and the enemy’s defeat. We have seen how כָּלֵם is used as a metonym for defeat. Likewise, בּוֹשׁ is a state someone is in when being put to shame (כָּלֵם). It seems natural to see them as having similar force (see also בִּשְׂתָה in Ps 70:3–4).

<sup>332</sup> While the text is notoriously difficult to re-construct from its corruptions, the reading of “loving disgrace” is firm.

of misplaced trust, *בוש* would seem to be understood the following way: *בוש* is the distressful, devastated state (of shame, disappointment, fear) one is left in when the unworthy person or object they trusted in and boasted about is proven unable to save them (Mic 7:16).<sup>333</sup>

The same can be seen in other passages where the emphasis is laid on the contrast between glory/honor of victory and the shame of defeat. Isaiah 24:23 states that when YHWH shows his glory (*כְּבוֹד*) to the elders (that he is mighty to save), while the moon and sun will be humiliated (*תִּפְּרָה*)<sup>334</sup> and ashamed (*בוֹשָׁה*), respectively. That is, suffer defeat at YHWH's *כְּבוֹד*. Again, there is a complaint in Isaiah 26:10 that the wicked do not see YHWH's majesty (*בְּלִי-יָדָאָה גְּאוּרָה*), thus, they call on YHWH to *בוש* the wicked. That is, "glory, majesty" is seen as the power to save, while "shame" is defeat, the result of experiencing the superiority of another (v. 11).<sup>335</sup> It is a state of weakness.<sup>336</sup> Another dramatic example is found in the judgment of Isaiah 45:23–25. YHWH will make his enemies bow down and tongue swear (v. 23). The content of their confession is perhaps what follows in verse 24, an open acknowledgement of the righteousness and strength of YHWH. Those who fight against him will be *בוש*, which seems to be associated with a low state, because Israel's opposite fate in verse 25 is vindication (*יִצְדָּקוּ*) and praise (*וַיִּתְהַלְּלוּ*).

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<sup>333</sup> In Jeremiah 49:23, Moab was proud, lofty in heart, arrogant (v. 29), insolent (*עֲבָרְתוֹ*, v. 30), boasts and deeds are false (untrustworthy, *בְּדַיּוֹ*, v. 30); here we have a parallel in v. 39 (prose), comparing "shame," "terror," and being a laughing stock, "*וַתְּהִי מוֹאָב לְשֹׂחַק וְלִמְחַסֶּה*."

<sup>334</sup> While we have rendered this verb as "abased," in the two times it occurs outside of contexts with *בוש*, it seems to mean "devastated" as is in the context of mourning. For example, in Isaiah 33:9, the land "mourns" (*אֶבֶל*) and grows feeble (*אֶמְלָלָהּ*). Lebanon withers (*קָמַל*). Bashan and Carmel are left without leaves. In Psalm 34:6, the idea of "disappointment," "downcast," or even "devastation," could be understood.

<sup>335</sup> See Wildberger on the text and interpretation. H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 12–27, A Continental Commentary* (trans. T. H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 553.

<sup>336</sup> We sometimes see *בוש* in the context of weakness (e.g., 2 Kgs 19:26 [cf. Isa 37:27]; Jer 48:1).



Lastly, the talionic judgment in Isaiah 66:4–5 is instructive. YHWH will mock (בְּהַעֲלִילָהֶם) those who ignored him and who are mocking those who do fear his word (תַּחֲרִידִים אֶל־דָּבָרוֹ), that is, reverence him. Their mock is the sarcastic “let YHWH be glorified that we might see your joy.”<sup>337</sup> It could be argued that בּוֹשׁ is an antonym for “joy” and means “disappointed,” and while this could be the case, it is just as plausible, if not more so, that בּוֹשׁ is operating against the arrogance of the mocking phrase itself, since YHWH’s intention is to mock the mockers. And if the proverbial punishment is to fit the crime, the glory-joy complex is opposite בּוֹשׁ. The word would denote a state of dishonor and dejection.

So, it is not just taunting that is involved in the devastation of or shame of defeat, but other forms of abasement. We see that when Moab is defeated, she mourns and becomes an object of laughter and horror (לִשְׂחָק וְלִמְחָה, Jer 48:39). In Jeremiah 50:12–13, the plundering nation will be חָפֵר and בּוֹשׁ, namely become a devastated wasteland (נֶעְרָבָה), an utter horror (שְׂמֵמָה בָּלָה) and an object of hissing (שָׂרָק). When YHWH promises that Israel would no longer be בּוֹשׁ in Zephaniah 3:11, he promises to remove those from her midst who are exultant (עָלִי) and arrogant (נָאָה). The associations with dejection, devastation and shame are all present.

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<sup>337</sup> It appears that בּוֹשׁ is an antonym with “joy” and means “disappointed” in the three contexts in which they appear together (Isa 65:13; Ps 35:26; 109:28; also // שְׂמֵחָה in Isa 66:5). One must be careful, as rejoicing has a double sense in some cases. It is not just a celebration of victory, but a *celebratory taunt*. For example, in Proverbs 17:5, we find “Taunting (לַעֲגוֹ) the poor insults (תַּרְדֵּי) one’s maker; the one who rejoices (שְׂמֵחָה) at calamity will not go unpunished.” It is clear here that לַעֲגוֹ and שְׂמֵחָה are in synonymous parallelism, and the latter concept is not “happiness.” Also, we read in Psalm 35:26, “May those who rejoice at my misfortune (שְׂמֵחֵי רָעָתִי) be put to shame and suffer reproach (נִבְשׂוּ וְנִתְפָּרְדוּ). May they be clothed with shame (יִלְבָּשׁוּ־בִשָּׁת), and may those that exalt themselves (הַמִּגְדִּילִים) over me be disgraced (כִּלְמָה).” Lastly, Hannah states in 1 Samuel 2:1, (lit., “My mouth is over my enemies, for I rejoice in our salvation.” Rejoicing is not just a means of celebrating victory, but a means of *publicly humiliating one’s enemies*).

Of course, this theme of “not being put to shame” is replete in the lament psalms, which assume an agonistic context for dominance (Ps 25:2, 20; 31:2, 18; 69:7; 71:1; 119:31, 116; also Jer 17:18). It would seem quite natural to interpret the phrase, “let me not be disappointed.” For example, in Jeremiah, the phrase appears opposite the double statement (הָבִיא עָלֵיהֶם יוֹם רָעָה and וּמִשְׁנֵה שְׁבָרוֹן שְׁבָרָם), speaking of the devastation of judgment. The root in question is parallel to such concepts as “do not let enemies exult” (עֲלֵץ; Ps 25:2);<sup>338</sup> “guard my life” / “deliver me” (וְהַצִּילֵנִי / שְׁמֶרְהָ נַפְשִׁי, v. 20); “deliver me (פִּלְטֵנִי, 31:2); “let [the wicked] wail to Sheol” (וְדָמוּ לְשָׂאוֹל, Ps 31:17); “do not let them be put to shame” (אַל-יִכְלֹמוּ, Ps 69:7) and “uphold me according to your promise, so that I might live” (סָמְכֵנִי כְּאִמְרָתְךָ וְאֶחְיֶה, Ps 119:116). In the vast majority of cases, then, the entreaty “do not let me be put to shame” is a request to be delivered from defeat, death,<sup>339</sup> shame and every excessively negative emotion that comes with it.

In any event, wrongful trust in idols is a very common theme in the psalms. For example, in Psalm 97:7, those who make idols are put to shame because their gods bow before YHWH. In Psalm 22:5ff., we find a connection to defeat and shaming. In verse 5, *נִמְלָטִי לֹא-בֹשׁוּ* parallels *נִמְלָטִי*. The following verse of the psalm seems to imply that though YHWH delivered his ancestors, he, despite his trust in YHWH, is in a state of *בוֹשׁ*. In verse 7, he complains that he is a worm (*וְאֶנְכִי תוֹלַעַת*), scorned (*תִּרְפָּת אָדָם*) despised as inferior (*וּבִזּוּי*), mocked (*וְלִעְגוֹ*) and an object of head shaking (*בְּשִׂפְפָה יְגִיעוּ רֹאשׁ*). In fact, they mock his object of trust, God (v. 9).<sup>340</sup> Adding other laments can only multiply such

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<sup>338</sup> With regard to the concept of rejoicing as mocking, see our note on *שִׂמְחָה*.

<sup>339</sup> Also see Psalm 37:19 (*וּבִימֵי רָעָבוֹן יִשְׂבְּעוּ*); Psalm 83:18 (*וַיִּהָפְרוּ וַיֵּאָבְדוּ*); Psalm 109:28–29 (*כְּלִמָּה*); etc.

<sup>340</sup> Note that there is a link between the object of trust and name, as the psalmist will praise YHWH's name for his deliverance (v. 23). Thus, he deserves praise from his people (v. 24) and abject submission from Israel's enemies (vv. 27ff.).

examples.<sup>341</sup> Thus, when a psalmist asks to not be “put to shame,” he is not just asking to avoid defeat, but the complex of actions and state that such devastation brings (cf. Ps 71:13).

The theme of complete devastation is key to many texts. For example, in Jeremiah 9:19 destruction and “shame” are linked (בִּשְׁנוּ מָאֵד // אֵיךְ שֶׁדָּדְנוּ). The verb בוש in several contexts appears to be synonymous with decimation. For example, in 2 Kings 19:26, YHWH claims that he had planned that Assyria would be able to lay fortresses waste in heaps of ruins (לְהַשׁוֹת גְּלִים גְּזִים עָרִים בְּצִרוֹת), a feat of destroying a nation’s great strength. Their inhabitants would be “shorn of strength, devastated and terrified” (קִצְרֵי־יָד חֲתוּ וַיִּבְשּׁוּ). This state is equated with the withered condition new or withered vegetation (v. 23), that is, they will be reduced to impotence (cf. Isa 37:27). In Isaiah 1:29, is another example: “You will be ashamed because of the oaks you delighted in (תִּמְדָּתְכֶם אֲשֶׁר בְּתִרְתְּכֶם), humiliated because of the gardens which you chose (יִבְשׁוּ מִגְדֵּי־אֲשֶׁר בְּחָרְתֶּם).<sup>342</sup> The content of the בוש / חפר pair is spelled out in the next verses: they will be like oaks whose leaves wither and garden without water (v. 30). The next verse puts it another way, the strong will be like tinder that will be burned up (v. 31). Thus, there seems to be an idea of complete destruction (// the underworld [אֲדֹמַיִן] in Jer 17:13; // double destruction [וּמִשְׁנֵה שֶׁבֶרֶץ שֶׁבֶרֶץ] in Jer 17:18). This decimation might also be the sense of Isaiah 19:9 and the parallel to growing pale (הוֹדִי) that might signify without strength, courage or even life. Lastly, in Joel 2:26–27, YHWH tells Israel that he will repay them

<sup>341</sup> The psalmist in Psalm 31 complains that he is the “taunt” (תִּדְרֹפָה) and “great horror” (מָאֵד וּפְתָר). He complains that “people ‘flee from me’” (יָדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי); he hears whispering and terror all around (מְגִיד); people scheme and plot to take life (v. 13). Thus, in verse 12, he laments that he has become a social outcast, which he likens to death (נִשְׁכַּחְתִּי כְּמֵת).

<sup>342</sup> Hans Wildberger takes the reference to oaks and gardens as a reference to idols. See H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12, A Continental Commentary* (trans. T. H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 76–77.

for the complete stripping which the devouring insects inflicted upon the land (i.e., the devastation on the land),<sup>343</sup> and he promises them that they will not return to this state of בוש again (also note that the object of trust is YHWH's reputation). Thus, opposite of devastation is satisfaction in verse 26.

As we can see, בוש is associated with a number of very intense negative emotions. For example, Isaiah 65:13 states: "...my servants shall rejoice, but you will be put to shame" (i.e., devastated). This is parallel to v. 14: "my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but as for you, you will cry out because of the pain of heart (מִכָּאֵב לֵב) and wail because of a broken spirit (וּמִשִּׁבְרֵי רוּחַ תִּתְלַלְלוּ)." That some type of social shame is connected with this devastation is seen from the fact that YHWH's servants will be given a different name and YHWH will use theirs as a curse (v. 15).<sup>344</sup> Also, we have seen the association with fear, as בוש and חתה in parallel 10 times (also with idiom, פָּנֵי יְהוָה יִתְדוּרֻּ),<sup>345</sup> wailing, mourning (Jer 9:17–18; Jer 48:37–38) and terror (Jer 15:8).<sup>346</sup> There is no one emotional concept that embraces בוש, it appears to describe a person who is at the proverbial "end of their rope," who is deeply dejected and humiliated. It is a state described like death.

We should add that there are some contexts in which בוש is best rendered something like "to be disappointed," though perhaps not completely without a notion of shame. "Disappointment" is a fair understanding for the empty-handed harvesters in Jeremiah 12:13 who try to harvest from a desolate and mourning land (v. 11; cf. Jer

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<sup>343</sup> Possibly there is some allusion to the concept of land being naked when it is stripped of its resources (Gen 42:9, 12).

<sup>344</sup> For the honorific associations with having a "new name," see Isaiah 62:2–4, 12.

<sup>345</sup> The idea of "one's face turning pale" is connected to extreme terror (e.g., Dan 5:6, 9; Joel 2:6; Nah 2:11).

<sup>346</sup> This is even true of impending doom. In Jeremiah 49:23, Hamath and Arpad are בושָׁה when they hear of the bad news. They melt away [in fear] like the sea (יִמְלֹגוּ בַיָּם).

15:9).<sup>347</sup> But we would also suggest that this “disappointment” could not be divorced from the more complex that are tied to the context of the word. In summary, the qal of בּוֹשׁ is associated with the humiliation of defeat and all of its negative associations: death, devastation, shame and shaming, terror, wailing, etc.

We find the same types of meanings associated with the hiphil of בּוֹשׁ; thus, we can just summarize our results with some sparing comments. We see בּוֹשׁ refers to moral-social shame. For example, in Jeremiah 2:26, it is more common that a thief is shamed after getting caught.<sup>348</sup> The same is true for adulterous activity (Hos 2:5–7). The honor-shame contrast seems especially true of the Proverbs. For example, “an honorable (חַיִּיל) wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame (קִבְיֹשָׁה) is a rottenness in his bones”<sup>349</sup> (10:5; also 14:35; 17:2; 19:26; 29:15).

In certain contexts, the hifil of בּוֹשׁ could mean “to be disappointed” in placing one’s trust in a false idol. More than likely, however, it means “to suffer embarrassment for trusting in “the wise,” worthless idols (Jer 8:9, 12; 10:14; 50:2; 51:17), as we argued with the qal of בּוֹשׁ. The same is true of trusting in a stronghold. Trusting in YHWH or his instruction (Ps 119:31) is the only sure safe haven to the biblical writers.

The root בּוֹשׁ also seems to be a metonym for “defeat” (and the complex of experiences that come with it that we noted above). For example, in Jeremiah 8:9 we

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<sup>347</sup> Possibly the meaning could be “shame,” if one looks at Jeremiah 14:3 and the parallel with בּוֹשׁ, כָּלָם and הִפְּחָה רֹאשׁ. But these could be signs of intense mourning too, as acts of self-abasing and humiliation are two sides of the same coin. See our discussion under the “high/low” semantic domain.

<sup>348</sup> There is no reference to the “shaming” of thieves in Israelite law, but the thief who is caught in Job 30:5 is driven from society. Also, thieves who did not steal out of necessity gained no sympathy from anyone and were “despised” (יָבוֹזָה). Lastly, in Jeremiah 49:9, the thief becomes the object of laughter (הִשְׁחָחַק) and the object of head shaking. See our discussion above with regard to head shaking.

<sup>349</sup> The phrase rottenness in bones (רֶקֶב בְּעֵצִים) appears to be one of fear (Hab 3:6). Thus, we see the oft connection between “shame” and “fear.”

find the parallel *חַתָּה* and *בוֹשׁ*.<sup>350</sup> As a result, the blessings of the wise will be given to others (v. 10).<sup>351</sup> The same can be said of Jeremiah 46:24 (*נִתְּנָה בְיָד עַם-צָפוֹן* // *נִלְכְּדָה*). For acting shamefully, they will presumably suffer a talionic punishment of being overthrown (Jer 8:12). In Jeremiah 48:1, there are parallels to defeat and devastation (*הַמִּשְׁגָּב וְהַתָּה* and *נִלְכְּדָה* // *הַבִּישָׁה*; also note *שָׁדְדָה*).<sup>352</sup> There appears to be some link to shame: the fame of Moab is no more (*אֵין עוֹד תְּהִלַּת מוֹאָב*, v. 2). It is because she trusted her strongholds (v. 7) and Chemosh who will be shamed too (v. 7).<sup>353</sup> Lastly, in Zechariah 10:5 God will make Judah a proud warhorse (v. 3) who will trample the enemy in the mud of the streets and “put to shame” the riders of the horses (*וְהַבִּישׁוּ רֹכְבֵי סוּסִים*). As an extension of the idea of defeat is the concept of “bringing something to a nothing.” For example, the wicked bring the council of the poor to nothing (Ps 14:6). Or it seems to mean “to have little” in Proverbs 10:4–5 “a slack hand causes poverty,” and “a child who sleeps in harvest causes shame.” The juxtaposition of the passages seems to associate poverty (having little) and shame, as we have seen with our treatment of honor above. And so, it is understandable that the hiphil *בוֹשׁ* is also associated with feelings of devastation in calamity. In Joel 1:11, the Israelites are called to *הַבִּישׁוּ* because of their devastated lands (v. 10).

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<sup>350</sup> The pair *חַתָּה* and *בוֹשׁ* (lit. “terror and shame”) appear 8 times in poetic contexts (twice in prose) and only three *בוֹשׁ* with in the hiphil.

<sup>351</sup> For the associations with shame, see our discussion of the Deuteronomic curses in the next chapter.

<sup>352</sup> Also see Jeremiah 48:20; 50:2; Ps 44:8; Ps 53:6 (*פָּזַר עֲצָמוֹת הָאֶדְנִי*); Ps 119:116 (*וְאֵל-הַבִּישָׁנִי* *כָּאֶמְרָתְךָ וְאֶחְיֶה*).

<sup>353</sup> The passage is filled with references to lost honor. All of the Moab’s renown (*עוֹד תְּהִלַּת מוֹאָב*) will be lost; its heroes and mighty warriors will be defeated by YHWH (v. 14) and their choicest men will be slaughtered (v. 15). YHWH calls all of those who knew their reputation (name) to mourn them (v. 17), and their mighty scepter will be broken, their glorious staff (*מִקְלֵ הַתְּפָאָרָה*) broken (v. 17). YHWH goads the enthroned daughter of Dibon (*יִשְׁבֶּת בֶּת-דִּיבּוֹן*) to come down from glory (throne) and sit on parched ground (*רִדִּי מִכְבוֹר יִשְׁבִּי בַצָּמָא*). After the long description, YHWH says in verse 20, “Moab is put to shame (*הַבִּישׁ מוֹאָב*)...Moab is laid waste (*שָׁדְדָה מוֹאָב*).”

Perhaps this idea of having little explains the curious expression עֲרֵבֹשׁ (Jdg 3:25; 2 Kgs 2:17 and 8:11). Every passage shares the common context: the feeling generated after a lengthy pass of time (waiting on a king to relieve himself, searching for Elijah and staring down the man of God) and extreme duress. It seems like the king's guards in Judges 3:25 are deeply concerned when the kings did not open the doors to the roof chamber. In 2 Kings 2:17 the man of God causes deep distress over the fate of Israel (v. 12). The same can be said for 2 Kings 8:11, though admittedly, the fit is less clear where Elisha is hard pressed until he becomes pressured enough to send men on the search for Elijah. Thus, it seems to us that עֲרֵבֹשׁ means: “until becoming deeply distraught” because of concern, sorrow or pressure.

Two examples appear to us to be examples of shame. In the first instance, Joab complains that David has covered the faces of his servants with shame (אֶת־פְּנֵי כָל־עַבְדֵּיךָ) when the king mourns for his rebellious son Absalom. We will discuss this phrase below. As we have said, acts of mourning and humiliation are similar. David in 1 Samuel 19:4 covers his face in grief. While his men should be celebrating, they too are forced to grieve with David, and have to cover their heads and return to town quietly, acting like men who have shamefully run in battle (הַנִּכְלָמִים בְּנוֹסִים בַּמִּלְחָמָה). In the second example (final prose case), it must be said that, though Avrahami balks at the suggestion that יִתְבַּשְּׁשׁוּ (ἡσχύνοντο, LXX) means “shame” in Genesis 2:5, it is difficult to understand how else to render it otherwise. Even if we employed the translation “deep distress,” then one must ask? The connection between “shame” and nakedness appears in a number of passages, even with other “shame” roots.<sup>354</sup>

<sup>354</sup> Note the following that involve בָּשָׁה, and קָלֹן: בָּשָׁה עֲרֹת אָמֶךְ: קָלֹן, 2 Sam 20:30; מִצָּרִים שֶׁת עֲרֹת מִצָּרִים, Isa 20:4; עֲרֹת וְיִתְבַּשְּׁשׁוּ, Mic 1:11; עֲרֹת בָּשָׁה, Isa 47:3; תִּגְלַל עֲרֹתְךָ גַּם תִּרְאֶה תִרְפָּתְךָ, Nah 3:5. See our discussion below with regard to בָּשָׁה. We have adequately covered the connection between תִּרְפָּה and the concept of shame.

The noun *בושה* appears in only four passages in our restrictive study, all poetic (Ezek 7:18; Obad 1:10; Mic 7:10; Ps 89:46). In the judgment YHWH brings upon Israel, they will mourn and *בְּלִפְנֵי בֹשֶׁה*. “Disappointment” or, our suggestion, “deep distress” seem possible. “To cover the face with shame” is also associated with *חָרַף* (e.g., Isa 25:8) and the idiom appears with *כלם* in Jer 51:51 where it is parallel to hearing insults (*כְּסִתָּה כְּלָמָה* // *שָׁמַעְנוּ חֲרָפָה*, “insults”; also 69:8).<sup>355</sup> In Obadiah, the “shame that will cover” them is YHWH’s judgment, and expression which represents their “shameful deeds” (*בושה*). In Micah 7:10, we see YHWH’s *talionic* judgment on Israel’s enemies for their taunt, “where is your God?” The judgment is depicted as “covering [them] with shame” (*חֲרָפָה כְּסִתָּה*), her for their taunts. Moreover, the judgment is represented as being trampled in the mud of the streets, an oft refrain that depicts the humiliation of defeat (see above). Lastly, Israel is “covered with shame,” because she has been defeated in battle (“removed his scepter,” “hurled throne to the ground,” “cut short his life”). As we have seen time and again, all of these concepts signify diminished honor.<sup>356</sup>

The same can be said for the noun *בָּשָׁת* that appears 20 times in contexts free of semantic interference from any derivative of *כלם* or *חָרַף*. In Isaiah 42:17, the *בָּשָׁת* appears opposite the phrase *כִּי אֶחָדָם*. The latter phrase appears eleven times in the Hebrew Bible, five times in the context of *חָרַף*, *כלם* or *בוש*. Outside of the latter context, the phrase only occurs in the niphāl and hophāl. It denotes “to retreat or forced to retreat” (Isa 59:14; Jer 46:5), “be driven back” (2 Sam 1:22), “be unfaithful / desert” (Ps 44:18; 50:5; Jer 38:22). Thus, in this context, it symbolizes defeat in battle, which is consistent with the concepts

<sup>355</sup> This is irrespective of how we understand *בוש* in that passage. We should note that the face and head, symbolizing places of honor are places where one might be humiliated (*כלם*) by spitting (Num 12:14). One might not be able to lift one’s face in humiliation (*כלם*; Isa 50:7).

<sup>356</sup> For other parallels using *בָּשָׁת* as the position of the defeated, see Dan 9:7–8; Ezra 9:7 and 2 Chr 32:21.



of shame that we have seen for other similar roots. In each context, *יָפְנוּ אֶחָדָם* is parallel to *חָפַר* or *כָּלַם*, respectively. That is to say, to turn Israel's enemy back is "putting them to shame," signifying Israel's salvation and the enemy's defeat. Likewise, *בוֹשׁ* is brought into parallel with the same shame words. Therefore, it seems natural to see them as having similar force (see also *בִּשְׁתָּה* in Ps 70:3–4). We have discussed the associations of honor and shame in battle in our previous discussions.

More direct references are made to honor in contexts where *בִּשְׁתָּה* is used. In Psalm 132:18, "being clothed with *בִּשְׁתָּה*" appears opposite placing a crown on the head of a David. Likewise, Zephaniah 3 connects the root with honor. The warrior YHWH will save Israel, rejoice over her (*וְגִיל עַל־יָדָהּ בְּרִנָּתָהּ* and *עָלֶיהָ בְּשִׂמְחָהּ*, v. 16), and remove her reproach (*תִּרְפָּתָהּ*, v. 18). Verse 19 recapitulates these themes in different words: YHWH will save (*וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּי*) the lame and change their shame (*בְּשִׂמְחָתָם*) into praise (*תְּהִלָּה*) and fame (*שֵׁם*) throughout all the earth.<sup>357</sup> Instead of being an object of scorn, Israel is something to rejoice over. YHWH will remove their status of shame and give them renown.

There are a litany of contexts in which *בִּשְׁתָּה* is used like other shame words. "Nakedness" and "shame" (*עֲרִיזָה-בִּשְׁתָּה*) operate as a pair in Micah 1:11. Being "clothed in *בִּשְׁתָּה*" can be compared to death (*אֵינֶנּוּ וְאֵהָל רָשָׁעִים*, Job 8:22). Likewise, Jeremiah talks about the "shame" of a thief, not disappointment (2:26). Other shame words *בִּשְׁתָּה* came be used as a metonymy for sin and is associated with death (*קִצּוֹת-עַמּוּם רַבִּים וְחוֹשָׁא נִפְשָׁם*, Hab 2:10). Lastly, losing a court case is seen as being "put to shame" (Zeph 3:5 // *הַכְלִים* in Prov 25:8), as might be expected from losing any confrontation where one's reputation is at stake.

In prose contexts, we see the same associations. Jonathan's support of David will mean his "shame," or put more positive David's eventual honoring (1 Sam 20:30; comp.

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<sup>357</sup> The pair *תְּהִלָּה* appear *שֵׁם* appear in number honorific contexts (Deut 26:19; Ps 106:47; Jer 33:9; Neh 9:5; 1 Chr 16:33).

2 Sam 6:20–23). Additionally, in the same context, nakedness and shame are paired (אֵפָה וְעָרֹת) <sup>358</sup> as they often are in the Bible (cf. קָלִינָה, Nah 3:5; תִּרְפָּתֵךְ, Isa 47:3). The “disappointment” is an unlikely meaning. Lastly, בָּשָׂה is used as metonym for idolatry (Jer 3:24; 7:19; 11:13).

#### *Conclusion of Avrahami’s proposal*

Before moving on to our general summary, we should assess Avrahami’s conclusion and methodology. We would we agree that studying “shame” roots in isolation from each other is crucial to avoid circular reasoning, and we would also favor giving pride of place to the context of בָּשָׂה in the Hebrew Bible before looking at cognate languages. Nonetheless, we do have some methodological concerns. First, her study must explain two glaring facts. First, בָּשָׂה in *many* other Semitic languages means “to be ashamed.” <sup>359</sup> Second, the LXX translators certainly understood the root this way. <sup>360</sup> The Bible would be a parenthesis in the history of the meaning of this root, which would have changed from “shame” to “disappoint” in ancient Israel and changed again back to “shame” in the Hellenistic era. In any event, what is clear is that the meaning “shame” has gone back thousands of years and is geographically widespread over eastern and western Semitic. If there has been a continued misunderstanding of the word, it is not

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<sup>358</sup> The phrase could be an insult, or it could be a reference to the fact that David will inherit and sleep with all of Saul’s wives when he takes power, which presumably would include Jonathan’s mother (בְּחִינָהּ, 2 Sam 12:8) since Saul, according to the Bible, had only one wife (1 Sam 14:50) and one concubine (2 Sam 3:7; 21:8).

<sup>359</sup> The Akkadian the verb *bā’āšu* (*bāšu*) is means “to feel ashamed” (G) and “to put to shame” (D), though the noun *bāštu* is about the quality of one’s personality “dignity or “pride.” See “*bā’āšu* B,” CAD 3:5–6; and “*bāštu*,” *ibid*, 42–44. Also Ugaritic *bṯ* (nom. *bṯt*) is equated the feeling one receives when rebuked. And in Aramaic we see *bht* “to feel ashamed” and the nominative *behta* (“shame”).

<sup>360</sup> This criticism would become even more damaging if we could date the biblical text or very large portions of it to the Persian Period where very little time would separate the authors of the Hebrew Bible and translators of the LXX.

merely due to the anthropological assumptions of Pan-Mediterraneanists reading faulty meanings into the text.

Secondly, Avrahami's conclusions appear to be slightly at odds with themselves. She surmises that because בוש (and many of the shame words) never or rarely appear as antonyms of common honor words, that the binary view of the honor/shame system is questionable. But if בוש is not a "shame" word, why would we find them in parallel? In fact, if בוש does not mean "shame" or something like it, then her study, with regard to the question of whether "shame" and "honor" are binary pair values, is not probative. We have, however, claimed that בוש can mean shame, as long as we keep in mind that the word carries with it a more complex set of emotions that do not translate easily into English. It is likely that the reason the two roots appear opposite each other only once is that קלל and כבד are semantic opposites in every way (weight, honor, severity, etc.), but בוש implies much more about the experience of one position while כבד is more about one's position or esteem. Even קלל described more how others viewed or treated someone who lost honor rather than how the "shamed" person themselves felt, which is how בוש appears to operate.

Third, Avrahami believes the definitions of other roots like כלם or חרף and their derivatives are questionable. We believe, however, that they we have fairly established their connection to concepts of humiliation and shame, according to the guidelines she had suggested, even without recourse to etymological considerations. But once we had established that חרף and כלם are associated with shame, it is very problematic to disassociate בוש from such notions when it appears in the same context with חרף once and with כלם some twenty times.

Fourthly, we can admit that in certain contexts the translation “disappoint” is the best translation, but the richness of the word does not allow it be equate בּוֹשׁ merely with this notion.

## 2.2 Overall summary

The Pan-Mediterranean school has often claimed that “honor” and “shame” are opposing binary values of Mediterranean cultures. From our limited study of two semantic domains (heavy versus light or high versus low), this appears to be true of biblical Israel. Of course, not every honorific expression has its “shame” counterpart. For example, YHWH can “make a name great,” but there is no corresponding expression “to make a name small.”<sup>361</sup> But generally speaking, the concepts appear to be expressed as binary opposites in the vocabulary. The same might be said of shame words. There do not appear to be any antonyms for terms like בּוֹשׁ, חָרָה and כָּלָם.

It is also clear that these values are significant for men and women alike in a variety of contexts. Honor and shame inform every context of life: morality, political discourse, international relations, economic position, cultural esteem for character or deeds, military valor, and so on. And to lose honor was considered catastrophic, whether in the family to a rival wife, on the battlefield to a foe or in the courts to litigant. So, serious was experience of the loss of esteem and position could be depicted as death. And if one failed to properly honor a person of high position like a father, king or deity, they could very well receive the death penalty for their insult. Lastly, we saw, honor

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<sup>361</sup> While we would have to pursue the following discussion in greater depth, we might suggest that one might find a conceptual opposite to “making one’s name great” in the idea of “blotting out (אָבַד / מָחָה) the name (שֵׁם).” The same could be said for one’s memory (זִכָּר) to perish (אָבַד). Defeat, destruction, childlessness, and dwindling fecundity of all sorts are all seen as shaming. We have especially labored to show in chapter 4 the connection between dishonor and קָלָל, which is often depicted as destroying a man’s household.

could be expressed with nearly every aspect of human action: by the words they speak, the presents they give, their dress, the bodily position before another person, etc.

While biblical Israelite society was not a class-based system, nonetheless, some held more esteemed positions than others, either by the choice of YHWH, as in kings and priests, or by the recognition of others, a son favored by a father (e.g., Jacob and Joseph). Nonetheless, society was not static, challengers could come along, as Saul and Hunan feared. But such struggle for pre-eminence is not only evident between households (Saul's and David's), but within them too (Jacob and Esau). The same is true of nations and their gods, as YHWH is insulted when Israel is defeated (Psalm 79).

Lastly, we have seen in a preliminary way, how the promises to Abraham and David contain honorific assurances, either marked or unmarked. If honor and shame, however, conceived, are important to the idea of the various biblical covenants, it stands to reason the "historians" of Israel who record these covenants as part of their "historical" narratives, might also understand these the honor or shame present in these covenants as part of a much larger purpose in their work.

## CHAPTER 3: BLESSING AND CURSE AS AN EXPRESSION OF DEUTERONOMIC COVENANTAL HONOR AND SHAME

### 3.0 Introduction

In the last chapter, we established various semantic domains for honor and shame that often, but do not always, appear in binary opposition to one another. While emotive words like בוש had no “honor” antonym like כבוד, כבוד itself could appear in antithetical parallelism with קלל, קלה, זלל and בזה to express such ideas as “importance” as opposed to “unimportance,” “inconsequentiality,” or “insignificance.” The same was true of a second semantic domain that appeared as a binary pair: “lofty” (גבה and רום) and “low” (שפל and שחה). And we noted that שפל, for example, functioned in much the same way as קלל, and רום could parallel כבוד in certain contexts.

We further showed that other words and idioms that contain יקר, גדל and שם were used to convey various concepts of honor. For example, in 1 Samuel 18:30, David’s successful military exploits won him a (lit.) “very valuable name” (וַיִּיקָר שְׁמוֹ מְאֹד), a phrase we understood to mean something like “an unparalleled reputation.” Thus, David’s esteem or prestige was heightened through his military exploits that were a result of YHWH’s blessing (2 Sam 7:9).

The root גדל is used in much the same way as רום, to refer to an increasing position and the prestige that goes accompanies it. Esther 3:1 states, “King Ahasuerus promoted (וַיִּשָּׂם אֶת־כִּסְאוֹ מֵעַל מַעַל כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים) Haman and placed him in a seat above all the officials (גדל) with him.” As we have seen, though, all of these terms can express heightened or, conversely, diminished status, prestige or esteem in a variety of economic, political relations and familial contexts. In essence, these contrasts convey a high-low binary opposition with regard to social, economic, rank and prestige, or generally a positional

view of honor and shame. And as we demonstrated briefly in the last chapter, it would be a fallacy to assume that the absence of these lexica in a given context implies the absence of these values. The values of the texts can be embedded in the structures of the stories themselves. Texts must, therefore, be read closely and sensitively in order to determine the possible values they may contain.

Thus, after having established these various semantic domains of various lexica of honor and shame in the Hebrew Bible, we are ready to address the embedded values of the Deuteronomic covenant. It would be unwise to attempt to relate every part of Deuteronomy to honor in shame. What we will show is that these values are pivotal to Israel's understanding of covenantal loyalty as it is expressed in the system of blessings and curses in Deuteronomy 28. We will argue that both the structure and content of the blessings section enumerate the various ways that YHWH will honor Israel with divine gifts for the express purpose of elevating his people to pre-eminent military and economic status before the nations. Such pride of place on the world stage is offered as a means of garnering Israel's loyalty and service.<sup>362</sup>

Likewise, the covenant curses are often a way of shaming disobedient Israel by lowering her status, even to the point of becoming an unwanted slave (עַבְדָּן קָנָה; 28:68). Put another way, when Israel is loyal to her divine suzerain YHWH, the nations will be Israel's vassals; and when she is disloyal to YHWH, Israel will become theirs. And this servitude to them results in a reduction of social status and prestige. They will become militarily and economically inferior to the nations, resident aliens in her own land, or

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<sup>362</sup> The idea of Israel's preeminence seems a natural reflection of the fact YHWH is conceived of as the highest God, and when his only chosen vassal is loyal, they will be the highest people. For Israelite monotheists who regarded the nations as worshiping empty idols who could not profit in any regard, the shame of the nations was all the more exacerbated.

when deported, even worse than the slave population of that foreign land. His people will become a social nothing.

We make two caveats. While we will attempt to recognize how a form-critical analysis will help us to understand the loyalty system in the text, it is not our intention to explore how honor and shame function in a historical sense. That is, it will not be our concern to analyze how the authors of Deuteronomy 28 used the treaty forms<sup>363</sup> at their disposal to bring about political-religious ends, other than covenantal loyalty. While we recognize that the form of the text and history are not divorced, a full-scale discussion of the possible historical realities behind such the covenantal form in the Israelite context is not necessary for the discussion of the *presence* of these social values in the text. Because scholars have never defined the connection between covenant and honor and shame in the divine-human relationship,<sup>364</sup> that task, instead of function, will be our focus. The purpose of our discussion about the covenantal form in Deuteronomy 28 is to understand the concept of Israelite loyalty.

What is more, and perhaps much closer to our goals, is that we do not analyze how honor and shame might interface specifically with Deuteronomic ideology: monotheism, election or the centralization of the cult, just to name a few concepts. In our next chapter, however, we will address the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem

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<sup>363</sup> We follow Dennis McCarthy's distinction between the use of the terms *treaty*, *treaty form*, *covenant* and *covenant form*. We use *treaty* when referring to non-biblical texts and *treaty form* when referring to the structure and content abstracted from various extent Hittite or Assyrian pacts. A covenant can signify any agreement made between two parties in the Bible—David and Jonathan, the king and the people, or God and Israel. The *covenant form* "is used to describe the manner of expressing or recording in words a covenant." D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), 10.

<sup>364</sup> We also recognize that the connection between form and history are intertwined. But a full-scale discussion of the possible historical realities behind the use of such forms by the ancient Israelites is not necessary for the discussion of the *presence* of the social values in the text.



and the election of the Davidic dynasty, which only appear in oblique form in Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut 12:5 // 1 Kgs 9:7; Deut 17:15 // 1 Kgs 11:34).

We endeavor to see how honor or shame form pivotal values in the text. That being said, form does communicate how we understand the covenantal relationship and the loyalty demanded therein.

### 3.1 The concepts of loyalty in Deuteronomic blessings and blessings

Because any culture's ideology of shame and honor is intimately is imbedded in their concept of social structures, defining Israel's relationship with YHWH is critical. That answer depends, at least in part, on exploring the form of how Israel utilized the structure and content of Hittite and Assyrian treaties. After sketching out the forms of Hittite and Assyrian suzerain-vassal treaties, we will conclude that it is where Israel departs explicitly from these forms that shows how pivotal honor and shame are to her understanding of loyalty.

#### 3.1.1 The second millennium Hittite treaty model

Though Korošec in 1931 was the first scholar to map out the formal elements of second millennium Hittite treaties,<sup>365</sup> it was George Mendenhall in a 1954 who first set out the striking similarities between Hittite treaties of the fourteenth and thirteenth century and biblical covenants.<sup>366</sup> Of course, as Dennis McCarthy has noted, forms are abstracted models,<sup>367</sup> and we should not expect all elements in our form to appear in each treaty. The general treaty form is as follows:

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<sup>365</sup> V. Korošec, *Hethitische Staatsverträge: Ein Beitrag zu ihrer juristischen Wertung*. Leipzig, T. Weicher, 1931. G. E. Mendenhall and G. A. Herion, "Covenant," in *ABD*, Vol. 1, 1180.

<sup>366</sup> G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition." *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954), 50–76.

<sup>367</sup> D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 7–8.

(1) *Preamble (sometimes with stipulations)*. In the treaty Šuppiluliuma makes with Azira, the vassal is to protect Šuppiluliuma as he protects himself, pay an annual tribute of first-rate gold<sup>368</sup> and appear before [his lord]<sup>369</sup> in the land of Hatti (cf. “I am YHWH your God...” [Deut 5:6a]).<sup>370</sup>

(2) *Historical prologue*. The vassal is reminded of the beneficence of the suzerain<sup>371</sup> or of his ancestor’s fidelity to the suzerain’s ancestors.<sup>372</sup> As Mendenhall states, “...the historical prologue is inseparable from the concept of *reciprocity*...,”<sup>373</sup> and for benefits bestowed by the suzerain, “the implication is, of course, that the common decency of *gratitude* would place the vassal under *obligation* to comply with the wishes of his benefactor [*italics his*]” (cf. “...who brought out of the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.” [Deut 5:5b–6]).<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Possibly we might see a reflex in the idea of bringing first-fruits (see Deut 26:1ff.).

<sup>369</sup> Though not a direct parallel, Israel was to appear before YHWH three times per year (Deut 16:16). Israel would celebrate their redemption from slavery (the Passover), YHWH’s provision of food surplus (Festival of Weeks) and his provision for them in the desert (Festival of Booths). They were to appear with gifts in hand “before YHWH.”

<sup>370</sup> Lines i.1–13, CoS 2.17A

<sup>371</sup> Lines A i.11’–18’, CoS 2.17B

<sup>372</sup> Lines B i.3–21 CoS 2.17B

<sup>373</sup> Reciprocity can appear quite explicitly: “As I, My Majesty, protect you, Duppi-Tešub, be an auxiliary force to My Majesty and the land of [Hatti]. And if some [evil] matter arises in the land of Hatti, and [someone] revolts against My Majesty, and you hear (of it), lend assistance with your [troops] and chariots” (see Line A ii.13’–24’, CoS 2.17B).

<sup>374</sup> G. E. Mendenhall and G. A. Herion, “Covenant,” in *ABD* 1:1181. Note that the stipulations in CoS 2.17B begin with the words “When I, My Majesty, took care of you according to the word of your father, and installed you in the place of your father, behold, I have made you swear an oath to the king of Hatti, to the land of Hatti, and to my sons and my grandsons. Keep the oath of the king and the hand of the king, and I, My Majesty, will protect you, Duppi-Tešub” (see A i.19’–34’, B obv. 9’–10’).

(3) *The main stipulations.* The vassal was reminded to pay tribute to the suzerain (alone!), to act as foe to the king's enemies and to befriend the suzerain's friends (cf. Deut 5:6–21).<sup>375</sup>

(4) *The provision for deposit and periodic public reading.* Copies of the treaty were deposited in the temples of the suzerain's and vassal's deities and were to be read by the vassal. This section sometimes appears in a colophon (cf. Deut 10:1–5; 27:2–5; Deut 31:10–13).<sup>376</sup>

(5) *The list of witnesses.* The witnesses to Hittite treaties always include divine witnesses<sup>377</sup> or sometimes human (e.g., scribes, royalty, military leaders, etc.).<sup>378</sup> In the Israelite context, however, YHWH calls on the heavens and the earth, or other celestial bodies to be his witnesses (cf. Deut 4:26; 30:19; 32), since Deuteronomistic theology only recognizes one God.<sup>379</sup>

(6) *Blessings and curses.* Though curses can be seen throughout different parts of treaties,<sup>380</sup> this section is stereotypical, as can be seen from the following:

All the words of the treaty and the oath which are written on this tablet — if Duppi-Tešub [does not keep these] words of the treaty and of the oath, then let these oath gods destroy Duppi-Tešub together with his head, his wife, his son, his grandson, his house, his city, his land and together with his possessions.

But if Duppi-Tešub observes these words of the treaty and of the oath which are written on this tablet, let these oath gods protect Duppi-Tesûb

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<sup>375</sup> Lines A i.19'–34', B obv. 9'–10', CoS 2.17B

<sup>376</sup> Lines iv.44–5, CoS 2.18

<sup>377</sup> Lines iii.78–98, iv.1–4, CoS 2.18.

<sup>378</sup> Lines iv.30–43, CoS 2.18

<sup>379</sup> M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 1.

<sup>380</sup> For example, in CoS 2.18, we find them in the section of divine witnesses: “But whoever causes trouble for Kurunta in this land and takes it away from him, or subsequently takes it away from the descendant of Kurunta, or reduces his territory, or takes anything away that I have given to him, or alters even a single word of this tablet, may these oath-deities destroy” (iv.16–29).

together with his head, his wife, his son, his grandson, his city, his land,  
your(!) house, your(!) subjects [and together with his possessions!]<sup>381</sup>

These blessings and curses here reflect the sentiments expressed in Deuteronomy 27:15–26; 28; and 30:19, respectively, though Hittite treaties contain no explicit statement regarding the purpose of covenantal blessings or curses. They appear to be ends in themselves. Deuteronomy, however, contains explicit statements about the purposes of the blessings (vv. 1, 7–13a),<sup>382</sup> though, of course, the implicit reason for blessings is to engender loyalty and obedience. While other blessings seem largely in line with the household blessings of Hittite treaties, the Deuteronomic framing of Israel’s blessings are unique. For Israel’s obedience, YHWH will set Israel high above the nations of the earth (28:1), a statement followed by the blessings that will make Israel superior to other nations, both economically and militarily. No Hittite or Assyrian analogues exist for 28:1.

In his latest *Anchor Bible Dictionary* entry, Mendenhall lists two more elements that were not part of his original research: the ratification ceremony and the imposition of curses. Neither of these elements is formally part of the written treaty, but each attends to its ratification (cf. Deut 26).<sup>383</sup> We might also mention the fact that Deuteronomy itself appears to follow the ancient Near Eastern practice of refortifying a relationship by renewing the bond between the suzerain and the next generation of vassal rulers, especially at what appears to be critical junctions in which the bond of

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<sup>381</sup> Lines A iv.21–32 CoS 2.17B

<sup>382</sup> J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*. JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 257.

<sup>383</sup> G. E. Mendenhall and G. A. Herion, “Covenant,” in *ABD* 1:1182. See for example Deut 27:15–26.

loyalty might be tested (e.g., the original covenant is cut at Horeb, but needs to be renewed before Israel is tempted to abandon YHWH for foreign gods in Canaan).<sup>384</sup>

Lastly, it is important to note that the language expressing the bond between the suzerain and vassal was mined from kinship terminology. Israel was to become YHWH's "people"<sup>385</sup> or "kin" (e.g., Deut 4:20; 14:2; 26:18; 29:13). Moreover, the suzerain-vassal relationship was often depicted as a father-son relationship: Tiglath-Pileser and Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:7), YHWH and Israel (Ex 4:22; Deut 14:1; Deut 32:6; Jer 3:19; 31:9; Hos 11:1). Thus the bond between the parties is often expressed in intimate terms, analogous to that of a marriage covenant (Prov 2:17; Mal 2:14),<sup>386</sup> which is also employed as an analogy by biblical writers (Deut 31:16; Jer 2; Hos 1-2). Note that parties are said to "love" each other (1 Kgs 5:1),<sup>387</sup> "to know" each other (Deut 9:24; Amos 3:1-2) and to be exclusively loyal (Deut 10:12, 20).

Summarizing the relationship between YHWH and Israel, we can see that YHWH was seen as the superior party who bestowed upon Israel a unique relationship that demanded exclusive, whole-hearted loyalty. The earthly vassal's motivation for

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<sup>384</sup> Despite the fact each covenant between Šuppiluliuma to Tuḫaliya was to be an eternal covenant, binding the current rulers and all of their progeny, the Hittite suzerain seemed to make a new (or renewed?) treaty when threats to the Hittite kingdom surfaced (e.g. when Egypt becomes Hatti's enemy under Muṣili). Or perhaps new covenants were made (in our examples above) when a new king came to power over Amurru. That is to say, new significant historical circumstances call for new vows of faithfulness for a covenant designed to meet the challenges that might lie ahead for a new generation. We see three such examples: the initial covenant at Horeb/Sinai, the renewed covenant in the plains of Moab and the covenant renewal in Joshua. With regard to Deuteronomy, YHWH is concerned that Israel would be disloyal by serving foreign gods (Deut 13:6ff.). That there were discrepancies between the Covenant Code (an earlier law code) and Deuteronomic Code could be easily understood against this backdrop of Hittite treaties. New times merited a new approach, despite the fact that the first covenant was eternal.

<sup>385</sup> The extended terminology was "people of your possession" (Deut 9:26), a term which denoted their sole kinship by election.

<sup>386</sup> Jon Levenson states, "So great was the overlap between the two realms (marriage and state) that prophets often presented Israel's relationship with YHWH as a marriage." J. D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: HarperCollins San Francisco, 1985), 76. He also notes a proliferation of marriage terminology in Hosea 1-2 utilized to depict the fracturing of covenants.

<sup>387</sup> W. L. Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy" *CBQ* 25, no. 1 (1963): 77-87.

loyalty was to be found in their suzerain's beneficent acts on its behalf (e.g., Deut 28:47).

But Israel had another motivation too – curses.

### 3.1.2 Assyrian vassal treaties of the first millennium

Of course, there are significant differences between Hittite and treaties and the covenantal elements in Deuteronomy. Most notably, Deuteronomy 28 contains a significantly longer curse section that is quite different from the Hittite treaties, which tended to have short, stereotypical curse sections. Moreover, D. J. McCarthy, D. R. Hillers, R. Frankena, and Moshe Weinfeld<sup>388</sup> have produced a number of studies shedding light on verbal and structural parallels between the seventh century *Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon* (VTE), which were published several years after Mendenhall had published his article on Hittite treaties.<sup>389</sup> The form of VTE is as follows:<sup>390</sup>

(1) *Preamble*. This section contains the treaty parties and their progeny that the suzerain binds under oath: the suzerain (Esarhaddon), his genealogy (son of Sennacherib), honorific epithets (king of the word), the vassal (Ramataya) and his family who are under oath for all generations.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> R. Frankena, "The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy," *OtSt* 14 (1965): 122–54. D. R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BibOr 16. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964). M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (AnBib 21. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978).

<sup>389</sup> D. J. Wiseman, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1958. It should also be noted that the evidence for Assyrian analogs goes beyond VTE and extends to other epigraphic data like *kudurru* stones or Sefire treaties. M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 120.

<sup>390</sup> *ANET*, 534–41.

<sup>391</sup> Lines 1–12, *ANET*, 534.

(2) *Divine Witnesses*. The Divine Witnesses is an extensive list of all of the deities (often associated with their lands) that the vassal must swear before in a covenant ratification ceremony.<sup>392</sup>

(3) *Stipulations*. The conditions of the covenant are immense in number and form the basis of the voluminous curses.<sup>393</sup> Many stipulations obligate the vassal to be completely loyal to the suzerain. The vassal must be the enemy to the suzerain's enemies and report any revolt against his lord.<sup>394</sup> Likewise, the vassal cannot swear an oath of loyalty to any other lord.<sup>395</sup> The oath must be sworn with the vassal's whole heart and passed the treaty on to his sons.<sup>396</sup> No words of the tablet may be erased, altered, and transgressed.<sup>397</sup>

(4) *Curses* (some in *mašal* [parable form]). At first glance Deuteronomy and *VTE* seem to differ, as Deuteronomy contains blessings and *VTE* does not. The curse section in Assyrian treaties, however, bears some remarkable similarities to the curses in Deuteronomy 28. The curse sections in both texts are extremely large (in Deuteronomy the curses are four times larger than blessings).<sup>398</sup> Secondly, the content and sometimes wording of some of the curses in both texts are extremely close. For example, both have a curse for blindness (line 422 // Deut 28:29). Both curse the wives, sons and house of the disloyal vassal (line 428 // Deut 28:30–32). Among other curses are drought (lines 652–

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<sup>392</sup> Lines 13–61, *ANET*, 534–35.

<sup>393</sup> Lines 62–413, *ANET*, 535–38.

<sup>394</sup> E.g., Lines 173–179, *ANET*, 536.

<sup>395</sup> Lines 108–129, *ANET*, 535.

<sup>396</sup> Lines 385–396, *ANET*, 538.

<sup>397</sup> Lines 397–409, *ANET*, 538.

<sup>398</sup> Lines 410–668, *ANET*, 538–41.

655 // Deut 28:23), the skies becoming bronze (lines 528–31// Deut 28:23), the flesh of the cursed being eaten by animals (lines 425–7 // Deut 28:26), men watch as their wives are being ravaged by the enemy (lines 428–9 // Deut 28:30a) houses given to strangers instead of sons (lines 429–30a // Deut 28:30b), etc. What is more, Weinfeld notes that it is not just the content of the curses that have left their impression on Deuteronomy 28, but also the structure of *VTE* on verses 27–35. For example, verses 27 and 28 associate leprosy and blindness in this order, and the section closes with imprecations of darkness and leprosy (vv. 34–35). The chiastic structure of Deuteronomy 28:27–35 of the Hebrew text is inexplicable; however, when compared with the maledictions in *VTE* and *kudurru* stone inscriptions, we find that the order and content are explainable by the order and function of the Assyrian pantheon.<sup>399</sup>

There is little doubt, therefore, that Assyrian treaties have left their imprint on the curses in Deuteronomy. The implication is that despite any interpolations that could have found their way into the text at a later time, the a large portion of the blessings and curses would have been available to the Deuteronomistic historians, whether one believes them to have been writing in Josianic, exilic or post-exilic eras. It is, however, the presence of blessings that marks the Israelite departure from a purely Assyrian approach to loyalty. Mendenhall, we believe, is correct when he states:

The ideological matrix of these [Assyrian] loyalty oaths suggests that the only motivation for obedience was simply the *self-interested desire* to avoid the fate so graphically illustrated in the Assyrian texts and reliefs, in sharp

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<sup>399</sup> The order of the curses of skin maladies and blindness follows the hierarchy of Sin and Shamash, respectively. Weinfeld notes that Sin and Shamash “appear almost invariably at the head of every Assyrian catalogue of gods.” M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 119. Such an association between blindness and leprous diseases goes back to Mesopotamia and the Code of Hammurabi. Ibid, 121. Moreover, the blindness depicted in Deuteronomy 28 is not actual, as the Israelites will be have confusion of heart (וְכַתְּמוּהוּ לֵבָב, v. 28) or be driven mad by what they see (מִשְׁגֶּעַ מִפְּרָאָה עֵינֶיךָ, v. 34). Since Shamash is the God of law and justice, the curse of darkness is a curse on social order. Thus, the Israelites will be continually robbed and abused, but have no savior. In fact, the phrase “sight of your eyes” (v. 34) is paralleled in *VTE* 425.



contrast to the *gratitude* that was supposed to be the foundation of obedience in the LB Hittite treaties.<sup>400</sup>

While it can be profitably argued that *VTE* and other Assyrian texts were used to create the structure and content of Deuteronomy 28,<sup>401</sup> the Israelite rejection of a “curse-only” understanding of vassal-suzerain loyalty relationships bespeaks of the Deuteronomic commitment to a concept of loyalty that was also rooted in graciousness. Moreover, if honor is integrally tied to the Deuteronomic blessings and shame tied to the curses, as we will argue, then it follows the Israelites have explicitly placed honor and shame as pivotal motivations for covenantal fidelity. Lastly, since the suzerain-vassal relationship is a reciprocal relationship, where both parties are bound by obligations, covenantal love could be depicted as an honor-for-honor and shame-for-shame system. And while YHWH’s shame is not so clear from the Deuteronomic perspective, it comes out more clearly in the covenantal examples we handle at the end of this chapter.

### 3.2 The place of honor and shame in the blessings and curses

Given the ancient Near Eastern background we have just rehearsed, the suzerain’s role was to protect and promote the survival of a loyal vassal’s dynasty. The stereotypical blessings section of Hittite treaties focused on the well being of the royal household.<sup>402</sup> While blessings on the Israelite household—in the form of progeny, livestock, and crops—are a central concern in Deuteronomy 28, the blessing section is summarized by the promise that Israel’s loyalty would guarantee her pre-eminent

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<sup>400</sup> G. E. Mendenhall, *ABD* 1:1183.

<sup>401</sup> Weinfeld does not argue that the Israelite adopted the entire curse section. In fact, the wording was ultimately theirs, and other curses, for him, show a “local character,” (viz. vv. 38–42). M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 122–23.

<sup>402</sup> “[But if Azira keeps these words of the treaty] and of the oath which are [inscribed on this tablet], let these oath gods protect [Azira together with his head, his wives, his sons, his grandsons], his house, his town, his land, [and his possessions]!” (Lines A rev. 17’-20’, CoS 2.17A)

position among the nations (v. 1). In our introduction we pointed out that this interpretation of mutual honor is confirmed by the covenant ratification ceremony in Deuteronomy 26:16–19, which summarizes the very nature of YHWH's relationship with Israel.

Today YHWH your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances and to observe them diligently with all of your heart and soul. Today you have declared<sup>403</sup> YHWH: to be your God, to walk in his ways and observe his statutes, commandments and ordinances, and to obey his voice. YHWH has declared you: to become a special people (לְעָם סְגֻלָּה) as he promised to keep all of his commandments and to place you high above all of the nations (וְלִתְהַדָּר עָלֶיךָ עַל כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם) to be an object of<sup>404</sup> praise, reputation, honor (עֲשֵׂה לְתַהֲלֵל וְלִשְׁמָ וְלִתְהַדָּר) and to make you a holy people for YHWH your God as he promised.

We will say more about this passage below, but for now we should note that unlike both Hittite and Assyrian treaties, a pivotal goal of the Deuteronomic covenant was that YHWH would place Israel in a pre-eminent position of honor (וְלִתְהַדָּר עָלֶיךָ עַל כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם) for being loyal to him. That high position would raise Israel's prestige (לְתַהֲלֵל וְלִשְׁמָ וְלִתְהַדָּר).

It should also be noted that the reputations of YHWH and his people are now one. When nations see Israel obeying YHWH's commandments, the nations will honor Israel and YHWH with praise (Deut 4:4–8). And as we will see in our discussion of the psalms at the end of this chapter, Israel uses this connection to incite God to action in the midst of bitter defeat. The vassal shames its divine suzerain into action, not by insulting his ascribed honor (his divine power and prestige which they have to depend

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<sup>403</sup> The hiphil of אָמַר appears nowhere else in the Bible, but is not meant to communicate that Israel and YHWH caused each other to be bound in covenantal relationship. Citing Friedman, Duane Christensen avers that the language used is mutual and suggests a covenant relationship like marriage. See D. L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12* (WBC 68; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2002), 646; M. A. Friedman, "Israel's Response to Hosea 2:17b: 'You Are my Husband,'" *JBL* 99 (1980): 20, n. 14.

<sup>404</sup> Quite possibly the passage is meant to imply that YHWH is the object of praise, fame, and honor. Thus, when Israel is loyal to YHWH and he subsequently elevates Israel to pre-eminent status, the nations will praise the deity's name.

on to defeat the enemy), but rather YHWH's acquired honor, namely the sullied reputation he received when he was defeated.<sup>405</sup> Thus, while their God has lost reputation, his people can appeal to him because he is and believes himself to be YHWH of old.<sup>406</sup>

In any event, Deuteronomic loyalty is an honor-for-honor / shame-for-shame exchange system in which honor and shame operate as binary concepts.<sup>407</sup> When Israel honors YHWH through her obedience to the covenant, her suzerain blesses her for her loyalty, granting her prestige and status through economic and military superiority.<sup>408</sup> Implicitly such a connection is designed to secure their further loyalty and obedience. By implication, when Israel does not adhere to the stipulations of the covenant, YHWH will strip Israel of their economic and military superiority, leaving them diminished in prestige and status among the nations. We should note, however, that while blessing in Deuteronomy 28 is a divine gift that is used to honor Israel,<sup>409</sup> such a view does not

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<sup>405</sup> We borrow the language of the Mediterraneanists here, as it seems to be a helpful and apt distinction that the writers utilize, though not explicitly. Commenting on the distinction between ascribed and acquired honor, K. C. Hanson states, "Honor may be either ascribed or acquired. Ascribed honor is the status one has by being born, or by being deputized by a superior; it derives from one's kin-group, gender, order of birth, or delegated authority. Acquired honor is that which one procures through competition, especially in verbal 'challenge-riposte.'" K. C. Hanson, "How Honorable!," 84. Also see B. Malina, *New Testament World*, 30–33. Though there is a distinction to be made on the human plane, when operating within the divine-human sphere, the dividing line between acquired and ascribed honor collapses. All human honor is derivative. It is acquired from YHWH alone, while only YHWH inherently possesses honor.

<sup>406</sup> In fact, it is only a belief in YHWH's ascribed honor that gives the psalmist faith to trust that he could and would restore the people's lost honor by defeating its foes.

<sup>407</sup> As many scholars have noted, the concept of *talion* lies at the heart of Deuteronomic justice. But what is more, the prophets see disloyalty to YHWH as infidelity (Hosea 2:4), and the punishment (curse) for infidelity is shaming. Not only will YHWH strip Israel naked (v. 9), but he will also destroy her economic prosperity (vv. 9, 13).

<sup>408</sup> Note that the wisdom traditions make a connection between life and honor (Prov 3:16; 21:21; 22:4). Weinfeld's has connected Deuteronomy with the wisdom traditions. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*.

<sup>409</sup> As we stated in chapter 2, while a gift in theory can be thought of as freely given or received. The reality is that there is always an expectation of reciprocity that befits the quality of the gift given and the status of the one who gave it. Malachi could rightly complain against the Israelites (Mal 1:6–8), as could Hosea (2:7–10).

rule out notions of humility and honor.<sup>410</sup> The Deuteronomistic writers even present David as a humble servant and therefore honorable before Saul (1 Sam 24:10–16). Deference toward one’s superiors is always seen as a fitting response (2 Sam 9:6; 22:28).

### 3.2.1 Honor and blessing<sup>411</sup>

As we stated earlier, the blessings are divine gifts that have the purpose of raising Israel’s power and prestige, which act as motivation to secure the fidelity and obedience of God’s people. The blessing section of Deuteronomy 28 accomplishes this in two ways: content and structure. The overall structure of this section forms an A-B-A’ pattern, and the sections A and A’ form an A-B-B’-A’ pattern.

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<sup>410</sup> Recalling our review of Pedersen from the first chapter, we would agree here with him in this particular context that blessings and honor are intricately tied, though we do not necessarily believe that honor “fills” Israel, as Pedersen seems to think that honor “fills” a man’s soul. He appears to eschew an estimative view of honor, though clearly in this passage, honor is defined as the nation’s esteem of Israel and her God. A lack of blessing in the Hebrew Bible, however, is not always consonant with the loss of honor, at least before the eyes of God. The Suffering Servant of Isaiah would provide a parade example of how honor and humility can be tied together in the Bible.

<sup>411</sup> Chapter 28 no doubt exhibits compositional layering. Richard Nelson’s reconstruction of the blessings (B) and curses (C) seems reasonable, though it should be noted that he believes that a detailed reconstruction is impossible. See D. N. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 327–29.

Nucleus:	B1 (vv. 1–6)	C1 (vv. 15–19)
Secondary, Assyrian additions:	B2 (vv. 7–14)	C2 (vv. 20–44 [45])
Successive Layers:		C3 (45–57)
		C4 (58–68)

While Nelson’s assessment seems reasonable to us, Weinfeld draws attention to the fact that even while verses 48ff. are often thought to be later interpolations, they have parallels with Assyrian treaties, as we have seen. M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 126–27. Even what appears to be an original ending in vv. 45–46 followed by repetitions finds a direct parallel in *VTE*. Ibid, 128–29. But Weinfeld concludes that even verse 47–68 do have precedents in Assyrian literature. He states, “There is little doubt, then, that both the *VTE* curses and Deuteronomy 28 are composite literary creations, but—as Hillers has already indicated—‘not because of late redactional activity but because the scribes have combined a variety of traditional sources.’” Ibid, 129.

### Section A

- A If Israel listens to YHWH's commandments (v. 1a)
- B Israel will be placed above all of the nations (v. 1b)

### Section B

Enumerated blessings of economic and military success (vv. 2–11)<sup>412</sup>

### Section A'

- A Israel will be placed above all of the nations (vv. 12a–13a)
- B If Israel listens to YHWH's commandments (v. 13b)

By sandwiching section B, the blessings of military and economic superiority (vv. 2–12a), between A and A', the passage underscores the fact that the blessings are the means by which YHWH will honor Israel. Analyzing A and A' we see how clearly these themes are present.

- 1a If you listen to YHWH your God's voice, by obeying all of his commandments which I am commanding you today,
- 1b YHWH your God will place you high above all of the nations of the earth (הָאֲרָצִים וּמִתְנַתֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עָלֶיךָ עַל כָּל-גּוֹי).

The conditional sentence in 1a emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the divine-human relationship. When Israel is faithful to her God, he will grant her pride of place among the nations (v. 1b). As we stated in chapter 1, Israel's honor is not expressed in terms of standard vocabulary (e.g., כָּבוֹד). Instead, the concept of honor is communicated in terms of high status. As we will see, such honor can be lost, and Israel can be diminished in status. The second part of the frame, section A', is no different. It states:

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<sup>412</sup> What we are calling economic success is described in terms of a household's fecundity, yielding plenty of crops (v. 5), animals and children (v. 4). These three elements are considered to be part of a man's possessions and a measure of his wealth (e.g., Job).

- 12b You will lend to many nations and not borrow.
- 13a YHWH will make you the head and not the tail (וַיִּתְּנֶנּוּ יְהוָה לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב). You will be only on top and not underside (וְהָיִיתָ רֶק לְמַעַלָּה וְלֹא תִהְיֶה לְמַטָּה),
- 13b because you observed the commandments of YHWH your God, which I am commanding you today to observe diligently.
- 14a and you did not turn aside from any of the words that I am commanding you today, not going to the right nor left after other gods to serve them.

The differences between A and A' are minor. There are three statements regarding Israel's superiority in A': they will be the lender, head and top, which reiterates the statement in A that Israel will be placed high above all nations.<sup>413</sup> The three-fold reiteration of honor terms at the end of the blessings section emphasizes how central a concept honor is to Israelite blessings. We should note that Israel's disobedience to YHWH is not an abstract violation of a moral code or principle. It is transgression of an established relationship, or unfaithfulness. For example, disobedience is seen relationally, as "following other gods, by serving them" (לְלַכֵּת אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְעַבְדָּם), as opposed to failing to exemplify some ideal of "goodness." Thus, obedience to YHWH is fidelity to him personally.

Therefore, the inclusio structure of the blessings section emphasizes two things:

- (1) Israel's obedience is an expression of her personal fidelity to YHWH personally; and
- (2) Because God's people placed him before all gods, he will place them above all nations by granting them blessings, and such blessings will motivate Israel's continued loyalty.

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<sup>413</sup> One should briefly note that these concepts are paired in binary fashion with lender, tail and bottom. As we will see from the next section, disobedience will merit the loss of objective honor, (or status), which we understand as an objective view of shame.

As we said, though, it is not just the structure of this section that underlines the fact that blessings are a means of placing Israel in a pre-eminent Israel position, but it is also the content of the blessings themselves. Israel will be superior in two ways, militarily and economically. For example, Israel will be blessed when they “come in” and “go out” (v. 6), and the enemies that rise up against them “will flee in seven directions” (v. 25).<sup>414</sup> So, when YHWH blesses Israel, all of the peoples of the earth will see and fear Israel, because they recognize that Israel is YHWH’s possession (יִקְרָא עַל־יָדָהּ; v. 10).<sup>415</sup> Their strength and reputation derive from YHWH (cf. Isa 43:7). And as we have seen in our last chapter, defeating one’s enemies brings honor to the victors and shame to the defeated.

It is not just Israel’s military might that will make her superior to other nations, but her wealth, which is the focus of most of the blessings. In verses 4 and 11, YHWH promises to bless the fecundity of her households with children (פְּרִי-בִטְנָהּ), crops (אֲדָמָתָהּ), livestock (פְּרִי בִהֶמְתָּהּ), cattle (שֹׁגֵר אֶלְפִידָהּ), and flocks (עֶשְׂתָּרוֹת צֹאֲנֶיהָ). The themes of abundant wealth are stated repeatedly throughout the passage (v. 8, 11) and are a function of YHWH opening up the heavens, his good storehouse (v. 12a).<sup>416</sup> In this way, YHWH’s faithful vassal will have such surplus that nations will become financial

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<sup>414</sup> Christensen notes that “going out” and “coming in” are related to military activity (cf. Deut 31:2; also Num 27:17, 21, 1 Sam 18:13, 16; 29:6). Clearly in this context the statement is juxtaposed with Israel’s military victory in v. 7. D. L. Christensen. *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, 672.

<sup>415</sup> For a similar usage of this phrase, see 1 Kings 8:43 where the same complex of ideas appears. Cogan notes, “proclaiming the name over a structure indicated possession and ownership.” M. Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 286. He also cites the conquest of Rabbath-Ammon (2 Sam 12:27–28), the ark (2 Sam 6:2) and over people (Isa 4:1; Amos 9:12).

<sup>416</sup> YHWH’s “storehouses” (אֶצְרוֹת), though normally referring to the storehouses in his temple (e.g., אֶצְרוֹת בֵּית-יְהוָה; Josh 6:24), refer here to his heavenly treasury from which he personally gives life-giving gifts (e.g., Jer 10:13).

dependents of Israel (v. 12b). As we have seen in the previous chapter, wealth and honor in the form of prestige and status are deeply intertwined.

Therefore, both the content and structure and content of the blessing section underlines the fact that in every way, whether in might or wealth, YHWH will have pre-eminent status and prestige among the nations.

### 3.2.2 Excursus: Honor and the “law-grace distinction”

The conditionality of the Deuteronomic relationship, however, brings up a question about Israel’s honor. Is her honor ascribed via her relationship with YHWH (noting the references to the promises to her ancestors in v. 11) or acquired through obedience? Casting the question in this way assumes nothing more than the bifurcation of “works” and “grace” traditional in most Protestant communions. From what we could see in verse 14a, however, such a distinction appears to be a false one, as the Deuteronomic covenantal relationship is not, in the first instance, depicted as deriving from law, as that term is generally understood today.<sup>417</sup> Speaking from the standpoint of social values, to claim that ascribed honor and acquired honor operate in independent spheres is artificial in the divine-human relationship. In Deuteronomic thinking, they are dynamically related to one another. Thus, for Israel and even for YHWH himself, both are always in play.

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<sup>417</sup> Jon Levenson expresses the mutuality of law and love in the following terms, “On God’s side lies an obligation to fulfill the oath he swore to the Patriarchs, to grant their descendants the promised land, to be their God. Israel, for her part, is to realize her love in the form of observance of her master’s stipulations, the *mitsvot*, for they are the words of the language of love, the fit medium in rain. It is not a question of law *or* love, but law conceived in love, love expressed in law. The two are a unity. To speak of the one apart from the other is to produce a parody of the religion of Israel [*italics his*].” J. D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion*, 77. If the giving of such commandments is done out of love, then the only honoring response to YHWH’s gift is Israel’s obedience. Disobedience only shames the giver and is seen as infidelity to the loving relationship that produced it. It either disparages YHWH’s beneficence, or worse, attributes it to another god. As such, God removes his blessings from his people, and in effect shames them (e.g., Hosea 1–2).



Note for example the structure of Psalm 79, which we will explore in full depth at the end of this chapter. The psalmist portrays a situation in which Israel has been unfaithful to YHWH, and as a result, he has allowed another nation to defeat her in battle (see the curse section below). The defeat is bitter and results in Israel's abject shame (vv. 1–4). But YHWH is shamed in the defeat as his temple was defiled (v. 1). Yet because YHWH is Israel's God, their honor is inextricably tied together (v. 10). Thus, both Israel and YHWH have "acquired" shame.

Though YHWH has been devalued in the eyes of the nations, this does not mitigate his (ascribed) honor. One never gets the impression from the psalm that Israel believed she had an inferior god. In fact, it is her trust in YHWH's superiority over other nations' gods that is the basis for her prayer (v. 11). Because of his glorious past works, he is still *the* God who can bring Israel's redemption in the sight of the nations (v. 10b) and in so doing can avenge his own sullied reputation (v. 12).

Despite being shamed by YHWH and nations, Israel still stands in special relationship with him. She is not like the nations who "do not call on his name" (v. 6) and who "do not know him" (v. 6).<sup>418</sup> So, while she is shamed because of her dishonorable actions and her defeat, she is unique among the nations with regard to her ongoing relationship with YHWH, whose diminished acquired honor can be overturned at will (v. 11). And for his salvation, she will offer due praise to him throughout her generations (v. 13).

Lastly, we see this same interplay at work in Deuteronomy 26:16–19. Israel's agreement with YHWH alone has made her unique among the nations (לְעַם סְגֻלָּה), but the praise, fame and glory (לְתִהְיֶה לָהּ וְלִשְׁמָהּ וּלְתִפְאֳרָתָהּ) she will receive is predicated on her obedience

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<sup>418</sup> For the covenantal connotations of "knowing," see Hosea 2 and Levenson's discussion on page 78 in *Sinai and Zion*. relies on the intimate, enduring bond that exists between YHWH and his people.

(v. 18). Therefore, ascribed and acquired honor do not operate in some binary “law-grace” fashion.<sup>419</sup> Ironically, Israel’s “acquired” shame is based on the ascribed honor of her ongoing relationship with YHWH. And as we have said, disobedience is not akin to breaking abstract laws, but being disloyal to a covenant partner.

Before moving to the curse section, we note by way of summary that the Deuteronomic covenant outlines a reciprocal relationship in which YHWH makes Israel his possession, and she makes him her sole God. This relationship is expressed through a mutual giving. On Israel’s part, she will be wholly loyal to YHWH, exemplified by their obedience to his commandments. For this faithfulness, he will lavish wealth on her, which elevates her power and prestige above all other nations. In this way, honor is a pivotal value to the ideology of the Deuteronomic covenant. As we will see, shame is as well.

### 3.2.3 Shame and curse

As we have noted previously, there is a great deal of overlap between the content of the blessing and curse sections, and there are verbal and structural similarities

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<sup>419</sup> There are “rules” governing the relationship between YHWH and Israel, and it is true that a violation of these rules merits “punishment.” We, however, are denying the Catholic-Protestant formulation of the divine-human relationship in Deuteronomy. Catholics and Protestants following them conceived of the Law as stemming from the holiness of God where even the smallest transgression against that law merited death. This leaves the reader in a strange tension, as Israel not only fell into idolatry (certainly punishable by death), but did so *continually* throughout the centuries of her existence—without being put to death. The answer in traditional theological terms is to posit a grace as large as God’s holiness that is able to keep Israel from being wiped out. But there is no evidence that the deuteronomistic historian wrestled with this law-grace tension. The Babylonian exile was due to Manasseh’s *incomparable sins* (2 Kgs 21:1ff.). The breakdown of the relationship between YHWH and Israel was at the discretion of YHWH. Frank Moore Cross, commenting on Wellhausen’s romantic and Protestant antinomian leanings states, “That early covenant forms were sociocentric, mutual, and expressed in legal institutions (kinship-in-law) was unthinkable. Law – static, petrified, exterior, abstract – was the creation of the Judaic spirit, hence late and perverse. That such views persist in the face of new knowledge of the ancient Near East, the history of religion and law, and advances in social anthropology is a testimony of Paulinist and anti-Judaic dogma, or, in other words, to the stubbornly, often unconsciously held traditions of Christian apologetics in biblical scholarship.” F. M. Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 15–16. Thus, fidelity to YHWH as outlined in the Deuteronomic instruction should be viewed as a relational bond, not legal bond, at least as conceived of in the Western Christian tradition.

throughout both sections that tie them together.<sup>420</sup> Though the curses are much expanded from the blessings, the latter reflect the former in both content and purpose. That is to say, we should expect that YHWH, by withholding wealth and military support (e.g., v. 22, 24, 45), has the express purpose of shaming Israel who has abandoned him (עֲזָבָהּ; v. 20), not unlike the image of the husband in Hosea 2 who strips his wife naked (v. 11).

Despite the many structural parallels between the two sections, especially in the beginning, there is *no* immediate statement in vv. 15ff. concerning how Israel will be the lowest of all the nations. Perhaps this is because the extended curse section is filled with a litany of shaming actions, as well as the statement that Israel will be go “lower and lower” (v. 43), becoming a borrower and “the tail” (v. 44). More likely, the lack of a shame statement at the beginning owes itself to the close structural affinities with Assyrian treaties. Or it could be that the whole blessing-curse section is designed to go from high to low status: blessing in verse 1 leads to social superiority (honor), while curse in verse 68 ends in complete social diminution (shame). In this way, the divine-human relationship is encompassed by honor and shame. Even if we should be incorrect, the curse section ends with Israel’s occupying the lowest social rank, a rejected slave, bereft of any heavenly and earthly patron to provide for or protect her. And this statement acts to undo even the slightest social value that Israel once possessed with YHWH.

In any event, just as the blessings raise Israel’s economic and military status and prestige, many of the curses have just the opposite effect. The first way that YHWH will

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<sup>420</sup> For example, some of verbal similarities to the first six verses of the blessing section include: blessing and curses depend on obedience and disobedience with regard to YHWH’s commandments (vv. 1, 15); blessings or curses “overtake you” (תִּפְּצֶנּוּ; vv. 2, 15); being blessed or cursed “in the city and the field” (vv. 3, 16); blessing or curse on basket and kneading bowls (vv. 5, 17); being blessed or cursed when you come and go out (vv. 6, 19), etc. Structurally speaking, these elements appear in the same order.

shame Israel (i.e., destroy her economic status) before the nations is by cursing her crops (v. 16), flocks (v. 17) and offspring (v. 17). Then he will undermine Israel's military success, allowing her to experience defeat in battle (v. 19). She will be terrified and flee in seven directions from her enemies who will defeat her (v. 25). Those who survive will become the servants of Israel's enemies (v. 48). Her corpses will become food for the animals of the earth (v. 26),<sup>421</sup> and there will be too few people remaining to protect the corpses. The inability to protect themselves from shameful circumstances is a significant and recurring theme throughout the curse section, on which we shall comment on below. Lastly, the result is that Israel will become "a horror to all of the nations of the earth" (v. 7, 37; *וְהָיְתָה לְזִשְׁוֹנָה לְכָל מַמְלַכּוֹת הָאָרֶץ*).

The profound association with shame is not lost on Jeremiah who conflates verse 7 with verse 37 and expounds on becoming "a horror" in Jeremiah 24:9 and 18. Both passages are saturated with shame vocabulary. In the former, Israel will be a "reproach" (*תִּרְפָּה*), a "proverb" (*מִשְׁל*), a "taunt" (*שְׁנִינָה*) and a "curse" (*לִקְלָלָהּ*) in every place where she is banished. In the latter verse, YHWH's curses reduce Israel to a "curse" (*אָלָהּ*), a "desolation" (*שְׁמָה*), a "thing to be hissed at" (*שְׂרָקָה*) and a "reproach" (*תִּרְפָּה*). The result is that Israel goes from being a feared nation (because she is called by the name of YHWH) to one who becomes an object of derision (Deut 28:7, 10).

In addition to the humiliation of defeat, God will also inflict Israel with many maladies, such as the boils of Egypt, ulcers, madness, blindness and confusion (vv. 27–29, 60–61). She will be left in a vulnerable state in which she is robbed and oppressed (vv. 29, 31), but has "no savior" (*וְאֵין מוֹשִׁיעַ*). Abandoned without a helper, she will watch all of her blessings are stripped away and enjoyed by others before her own eyes (vv.

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<sup>421</sup> Again, for an association between shame and mutilation, see T. M. Lemos, "Shame and Mutilation," 225–41.

30–33, 38–42, 51–52). A man will have an ox that will be butchered before his eyes (v. 31) or build a house and not live in it (v. 30). Most shameful is that a man will have to watch as his betrothed is ravaged by another man (v. 30a).<sup>422</sup> Every bit of wealth that might have made Israel the head of the nations will be stripped away from her, leaving her the poorest of nation and needing to borrow for her survival.

As we have said, being without a helper is significant, because those unfortunate enough to be without a helper have become socially disenfranchised and thus shamed. To become part of a vulnerable class (e.g., a widow, the poor, etc.) was considered a disgrace, and those in such a position suffered insult (Ruth 2:15; Isa 54:4; Prov 14:31; 17:5). People in such a state would be forced into three positions. First, they could appeal to their kin for protection or redemption from financial trouble (e.g., Ruth). In fact, there appears to have been a line of people to fill this role for needy family or clan members (Ruth 3:12). For those people, however, who had no kin to help or who had no kin willing to help,<sup>423</sup> there was a second option, slavery. And according to the Deuteronomic curses, resident aliens, a socially disenfranchised and weak class, would become more economically prosperous than the Israelites themselves in their own land (v. 43). And in a reversal of Israel's economic superiority, the resident aliens will become lenders and the head, while Israel would become the tail (v. 44). There was, however, one more fate, even worse than the others, namely complete social rejection.

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<sup>422</sup> Following Nelson, we read with the Kethib *yšglnh* ("to violate, ravish") that is supported by 4QDeut<sup>c</sup>, OG and Syriac, instead of the softened Qere *yškbnh* ("to lie with"). R. D. Nelson. *Deuteronomy. A Commentary* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 325.

<sup>423</sup> It was an obligation to help distressed kin. For example, in the case of the levir, the brother who refuses to "build up his brother's house" is publicly shamed at the city gate when the dead brother's wife spits in his face (Deut 25:9; cf. Num 12:14).

And the nations who used to praise Israel would now treat her as an object of horror,<sup>424</sup> a proverb and a byword (v. 37).

Lastly, those who were rejected by everyone could only appeal to YHWH for help (e.g., Ps 40:17; 72:12–14). But Israel, having abandoned YHWH for another god, would have no one to protect or provide for her. The high-low contrast comes to the fore again in verse 43 when resident aliens living in Israel ascend “higher and higher” in social position, while native Israelites would “sink lower and lower” (מַעֲלָה וְאַתָּה תִּרְדָּ מִמָּטָה מִמָּטָה). In fact, the most honored of Israel, the elders would be shown no respect (לֹא יִשָּׂא פָנִים לְזָקֵן)<sup>425</sup> by an invading nation who is harsh (עוֹ פָנִים).

There is a fate far worse that goes beyond the high-low binary contrast. As there was no parallel in ANE treaties that promised pre-eminence as YHWH promised in Deuteronomy 28:1, there is no parallel in *VTE* for the climactic curse on Israel in verse 68. When God’s people are deported to Egypt and attempt to sell themselves into slavery, every buyer would reject them: “YHWH will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the route that I had promised you that you would not ever again see. And you will sell yourselves there to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer” (v. 68). Not even the least household of Egypt would want Israel. Essentially Israel will go from the head of all nations to an outcast in a foreign land, a social

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<sup>424</sup> The versions are divergent here, and it seems perhaps best to accept the MT. The MT reads לְשִׁמְיָהּ (“as an object of horror”), the LXX ἐκεῖ (“there”) and the Samaritan Pentateuch *lšm* (“as a [notorious] name”). The LXX does not make sense of ל, considering that it had not dropped out via haplography. Instead it has chosen to refer back to the foreign land in verse 36. Possible parallels are 1 Kings 9:7–8 (// 2 Chron 7:20–21) and Job 17:6–8. A weaker parallel is about exile, shame, becoming a proverb and taunt is Jeremiah 24:9, though not using וְלִמְשָׁל לְשִׁנְיָנָה שָׁמָּה (“I will make you a horror...and a proverb and taunt”). It seems best to retain the MT.

<sup>425</sup> See R. D. Nelson, 326 and the NRSV. In many instances, “to lift the face,” is to show mercy or favoritism to a party. In a legal context, for example, one should not be partial to the poor (Lev 19:15) and YHWH is not is not partial and take bribes (Deut 28:50). One whose face was lifted was one who was in a position of honor (2 Kgs 5:1; Isa 3:3; 9:14), and to not be able to lift one’s face is to be in a state of shame (2 Sam 2:22).

nothing. Moshe Weinfeld cites the curse in *VTE*, “The people who dwell in her...were distributed among strangers (mob) and have become slaves (Epis. 9, Fass. c.).”<sup>426</sup> Weinfeld notes that *CAD* translates the Akkadian phrase “strangers” as “riff raff.”<sup>427</sup> The curses of YHWH, however, will be more severe, as Israel will be lower than the “riff raff” that make up the slave population.

Verse 68, therefore, reflects Assyrian sentiments, but goes beyond them. It contains the uniquely Israelite flourish that acts as the climax of the passage. Like the blessing section, the structure of the curses speaks of the centrality of shame to the curses and would act as another strong motivation for Israel to be obedient to her suzerain. In fact, one might note that the end of the curse section shares essentially the same structure and content with the end of the blessing section, as v. 13a has two statements of Israel’s pre-eminence, one with Israel as the head and one with Israel as the top. Likewise, the curse section ends with Israel being the tail and completely socially abandoned, underscoring that Israel’s prestige has been completely effaced by divine cursing.

In summary, we have labored to show that, despite the fact that standard honor and shame terminology do not appear throughout the section of the covenant, these social values are pivotal to the divine-human relationship in Deuteronomy, as is revealed by the structure and content of the passage. This relationship is an honor-for-honor / shame-for-shame exchange between the divine suzerain and his earthly vassal. When Israel is loyal to YHWH, he blesses her with economic and military superiority so that her prestige rises above the nations. And when she dishonors YHWH with her

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<sup>426</sup> M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 116.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid*, 116, n. 1.

disobedience, YHWH will diminish her status, which we understand as shaming Israel. This is brought out in the parallels with the blessing section, the structure of the curse section and its content.

Lastly, we have shown that the acquired honor or shame experienced by Israel is based on her special relationship to YHWH (ascribed honor). What remains is to show that these concepts obtain in Israel's worship (Psalms) and historical memory (the Deuteronomistic History) as well, though we will specifically treat the Davidic Covenant and the place of the temple in Jerusalem in the following chapter.

### 3.3 Deuteronomic honor and shame in the history and life of Israel: the Ark Narrative

To verify our results, the next two sections of this chapter will demonstrate how the Deuteronomic vision of honor and shame was refracted in Israel's life and history.<sup>428</sup> We will sample two works that bear an imprint of Deuteronomic thinking, the Deuteronomistic History and Psalms. As both literatures are far too vast to explore thoroughly, we will provide evidence for our thesis from only a sample of them.

Perhaps there is no more recurring theological concept in the Deuteronomistic History than the sin-judgment-repentance-favor cycle. This model has proven quite helpful in analyzing various Deuteronomic themes in the Deuteronomistic History, though it assumes that the primary concept behind the divine-human relationship is a one of international diplomacy. As we have seen, the chief or central concept informing the Deuteronomic covenant was a relational one based on the honor and shame system of Israel. Borrowing from Timothy Laniak's approach, we can analyze this cycle from

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<sup>428</sup> Again, for our purposes, it matters little whether the stories in her history are literal fact, as much as they preserve the values of those who produced them.



the perspective of social values. And we can see how our analysis of the Deuteronomistic relationship casts some new light on Deuteronomistic History.

Because it would be impossible to analyze every instance in which this theme appears, we will take one of the prominent instances that proved to be a pivotal point in the history of biblical Israel, the capture of the Ark by the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4–6.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Important to our argument is that this narrative be consistent with Deuteronomistic ideology. In 1926, Leonhard Rost was the first to argue that the ark narrative (AN) was a distinctive, isolated and independent source stemming from 1 Samuel 1:4b to 7:1, including 2 Samuel 6. The author of the succession history had this material at his disposal. Because the material depicts how the ark came to rest in Jerusalem, it must therefore have originated among the priests of Jerusalem. See L. Rost, *The Succession to the Throne of David* (Historic Texts and Interpreters in Biblical Scholarship 1; Sheffield, England: Almond Press, 1982). While most scholars have followed Rost in his connection, others like Thomas Römer believe that the narrative is post-Deuteronomistic in origin and at odds with Deuteronomistic thinking. Römer, for example, states that not only do certain aspects of the passage not accord with Deuteronomistic ideology (e.g., the Philistine priests know what magic to perform in 1 Sam 6:6, which is against Deut 18:10), but the text is even critical of the Deuteronomistic concept of “holy war” and “segregation,” as the Philistines recognize the power of the ark. Lastly, 1 Sam 4:8–9; 5:12; 6:6 contain allusions to the plague story in Exodus 1–15, which include priestly layers of the story (e.g., Exod 2:23). Nevertheless, most scholars have accepted that AN is a source, early and consistent with Deuteronomistic ideology. For example, Veijola believes literary connection between the Shiloh tradition in 1 Samuel 1–3 and the ark narrative in 1 Samuel 4:1b–7:1 demonstrates that the latter is a completely deuteronomistic text. T. Veijola, *Die ewige Dynastie: David und die Entstehung seiner Dynastie nach der deuteronomistischen Darstellung* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Ser. B, Tom. 193; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1975), 101. A. D. H. Mayes believes that “the oracle against the house of Eli is a part of the deuteronomistic basis for introducing the ark story.” A. D. H. Mayes, *Israel between Settlement and Exile* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 166, n. 7. Ahlström, for example, sees the ark narrative in 1 Samuel 1 Samuel 1b–7:1 as a pre-monarchic story that the Deuteronomists inserted into the narrative of Samuel to show the emergence of the northern God Yahweh as an “empire God.” He states, “...the primary purpose of this text is...to describe how the ‘unconquerable’ Yahweh began his rise to the position of an empire god—the god who finally subdued the Philistines.” G. W. Ahlström, “The Travels of the Ark: A Religio-Political Composition,” *JNES* 43, no. 2 (1984), 143. For many scholars, AN is considered to be one of three oldest narrative sources comprising the (northern) prophetic history in Samuel, the Saul Cycle and history of David’s rise being the other two. P. K. McCarter avers that AN is the second stage in the pre-Deuteronomistic prophetic history that was later incorporated into the Deuteronomistic history. P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 8; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980), 18–23. It is Patrick Miller and J. J. M. Roberts’s pioneering work that has taken the discussion about AN in a fresh direction. They disagree with Rost on two fronts: they (along with many scholars) doubt the literary connection to 2 Samuel 6; and they take exception with Rost’s narrow claim regarding the narrator’s cultic purposes. With regard to the latter, Miller and Roberts argued in their monograph *The Hand of the Lord* that AN resembles the ancient Near Eastern practice of carrying off divine images as the spoils of war. Doing so was a demonstration that the victor’s gods were superior to those of the vanquished. They even note how the defeated god’s divine symbols might be returned as a benevolent gesture demonstrating the superiority of the conquering god. Miller and Roberts conclude, “The formulation of this narrative belongs to the period of religious crisis between the disastrous defeat at Ebenezer and the much later victories of David.” See P. D. Miller and J. J. M. Roberts. *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the “Ark Narrative” of 1 Samuel* The Johns Hopkins near Eastern Studies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 74. In our view, whatever the origins of this story, there does not seem to be any absolute reason for rejecting the Deuteronomistic inclusion of this story. Our view largely follows McCarter, Roberts, and Miller. If there are discrepancies with Deuteronomistic ideas (e.g., the ark as the presence of YHWH in 1 Sam 4:4), such differences were not enough to offend Deuteronomistic

At the beginning of the ark capture story, Israel attempts to free herself from the bondage to the Philistines (1 Sam 4:9), a condition caused when she abandoned YHWH (1 Sam 7:2–3). The Philistines initiate a battle and crush the Israelites (4:2), who return to camp to question why YHWH caused them to be routed by the Philistines (6:1–3). As a result, Israel brings the “ark of the covenant” into the camp (4:10). Possibly this designation for the ark in this section is a purposeful detail. It is referred to as the “ark of God,” “ark of YHWH,” and “ark,” forty-seven times in the Book of Samuel.<sup>430</sup> With the exception of 2 Samuel 15:24,<sup>431</sup> only this passage in 1 Samuel 4:3–5 employs the designation “ark of the covenant” (4x).<sup>432</sup> The concept behind the term invokes not the

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sensibilities (cf. 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15). See our note below regarding magical parts of the text. It appears that AN is incorporated into the history like the other sources that comprise Samuel, without much interference from the Deuteronomistic hand. According to McCarter: “The most striking aspect of the Deuteronomistic redaction of Samuel whether Josianic or Exilic, is its sparseness...this was because the sources of Samuel most often came into Deuteronomistic circles as narratives of considerable length, already arranged in accordance with a ‘proto-Deuteronomistic’ viewpoint.” P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 15. Second, Miller and Roberts’s also point out that when compared to ANE analogs, AN must begin in 1 Samuel 2, which most scholars believe to be Deuteronomistic. Third, according to Miller and Roberts, because the vocabulary and style of AN and 2 Samuel 6 do not support the fact that do not support the original unity of these two texts, the author of the latter must have had the former narrative in hand when producing the latter. P. D. Miller and J. J. M. Roberts, 23. For example, notice the change of place name from Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam 6:21) versus Baalah of Judah (2 Sam 6:2), but notice how the phrase “ark of the Lord,” is Deuteronomistic (Josh 3:13; 4:5, 11; 6:6–7, 11–13; 7:6; 1 Sam 4:6; 5:3–4; 6:1–2, 8, 11, 15, 18–19, 21–7:1; 2 Sam 6:9–11, 13, 15–17; 1 Kgs 2:26; 8:4), though used the vast majority of times in 1 Samuel 4–7:1 and 2 Samuel 6. It seems reasonable to conclude that on balance that AN was adopted from an early source which was theologically consistent enough with Deuteronomistic values to include it in their theological history. For example, If anything, 1 Samuel 4–6 displays non-magical elements with regard to the ark. The ark failed to ensure victory chiefly because Israel had been unfaithful to YHWH, a theme quite in line with Deuteronomistic in thinking and against a purely magical view of the ark. While we also believe that it is best to understand the capture of the ark with the YHWH’s judgment of Eli in 1 Samuel 2, we will analyze the ark capture story alone, leaving our analysis of the Eli narrative for our next chapter. The purpose of the text appears to us to not only justify why the main cultic site moves from the north to the south (Rost), but also to demonstrate the superiority of YHWH on the world stage (Ahlström).

<sup>430</sup> For “ark of God,” see: 1 Sam 3:3; 4:11, 13, 17–19, 21–5:2; 5:8, 10; 14:18; 2 Sam 6:2–4, 6–7, 12; 7:2; 15:24–25, 29. The “ark of YHWH” appears in 1 Sam 4:6; 5:3–4; 6:1–2, 8, 11, 15, 18–19, 21–7:1; 2 Sam 6:9–11, 13, 15–17. The “ark” without qualification is only found in 1 Sam 6:13.

<sup>431</sup> It is interesting that 2 Samuel 15:24 is also an “exile” text. In this text, David is departing Jerusalem with the ark as he makes his way beyond the Jordan.

<sup>432</sup> Very possibly, one might read “ark of YHWH” with the LXX *κιβωτὸς κυρίου*. McCarter omits these four references to “ark of the covenant,” opting instead for “ark of God.” This is perhaps because he reads believes the ark as the throne is not compatible with the ark as covenant repository in Deuteronomistic thinking. See C. L. Seow who states, “In contradistinction to earlier tendencies,

presence of YHWH, but the covenantal stipulations. In any case, the presence of the ark of the covenant bolsters the confidence of the Israelite army (4:5–8), and it brings an equal amount of terror to the Philistines who fear YHWH’s reputation: “These are the mighty gods who struck the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness” (v. 6).<sup>433</sup> Also, the issue at hand is one of honor, not so much of mere land, as Tsumura notes.<sup>434</sup> When the Philistines rally themselves, they motivate the troops with exactly what is at stake: “Be strong, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you! Become men and fight!” (v. 9). The issue is not different in the Goliath episode (1 Sam 15: 17:9).

In the second battle more than seven times as many Israelites fall, the men scatter to their homes (v. 10), and Israel continues to be enslaved to the Philistines. What is most catastrophic, however, is that the ark is captured (v. 11). When a messenger tells Eli of its capture, the priest falls backwards and breaks his neck (v. 18). When Phineas’ wife

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Deuteronomy appears to downplay the importance of the ark. Accordingly, the ark does not appear anywhere in Deuteronomy in connection with the enthronement of YHWH. It is neither a war palladium, nor is it associated with the presence of God.” C. L. Seow, “Ark of the Covenant,” in ABD 1:391. Also see M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 36–38. Thus, possibly the MT is a later expansion in the direction of other Deuteronomistic texts. Or possibly, the LXX is an abbreviated text. In verse 4, the MT reads אֲרֹן בְּרִית יְהוָה and אֲרֹן בְּרִית הָאֱלֹהִים, while the LXX represents these phrases as the τὴν κιβωτὸν κυρίου and τῆς κιβωτοῦ, respectively. Admittedly, τῆς κιβωτοῦ could be a haplography of τῆς κιβωτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ where τοῦ θεοῦ dropped out due to homoioteleuton. In any even, we believe that while it is true that the ark is not explicitly associated with YHWH’s presence in Deuteronomy, presence is not absent from Deuteronomic thinking. In Deuteronomy 4:7 we find that YHWH’s presence bestows upon Israel a status among the “great” nations of the world, but her position is incomparable: “What great nation has a god so near to it like YHWH our God when we call on him?” (cf. Deut 2:7; 6:15; 20:1; 31:8, 23). That YHWH is enthroned on the cherubim seems to fit comfortably enough in Deuteronomistic thinking to be mentioned when David brings the ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:2, MT and LXX), to be described in intricate detail in the narrative of the construction of the temple (1 Kgs 6:27–29, 32, 35; 7:29, 36; 8:6–7) and to be recounted in (or to be placed on the lips of) the YHWhistic reformer Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:15). At least in 1 Kings 8, name and presence are brought intricately together (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:10, 16). Interestingly, 2 Kings 6:2 uses the phrase, “the ark of God which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned on the cherubim.”

<sup>433</sup> The LXX is expansive here. No doubt MT echoes the Pentateuchal account of the plague of boils on Egypt; however, בַּעֲפָלִים (Ketib; LXX ἔλκος) reflects Deuteronomic usage (Deut 28:7), not the אֵפֶת עֲפָלָה (LXX ἔλκος) of Exodus 9:9–11.

<sup>434</sup> D. T. Tsumura, 194.

hears that the ark has been captured, her husband has been killed in battle, and her father-in-law has died, she gives birth to a son and names him “Ichabod,” because “The glory has departed from Israel” (v. 22). While ‘glory’ is synonymous with God’s presence (15:29), it is also associated with Israel’s honor. And with YHWH in captivity, Israel is left without a savior. Tsumura, following McCarter comments, “It was understood that a people whose gods were in enemy hands was completely conquered.”<sup>435</sup> She had indeed become the slave to the Philistines—and their gods.

The ark is initially brought to Ashdod, and placed near Dagon in a symbolic act of obeisance to the Philistine deity (1 Sam 5:2).<sup>436</sup> But in the morning, when the temple doors were re-opened, it is Dagon who is humbled, lying prostrate before YHWH (יְהוָה נִפְלָא לְפָנֵינוּ אֶרְצָה לְפָנֵי אֲדֹנָיִם v. 3). Such a posture is one of submission and even adoration (Gen 17:3, 17; Num 22:31; 2 Sam 9:6; 1 Kgs 18:7; Dan 2:46). The next day, only the trunk of his body intact, Dagon’s hands are mutilated, lying on the threshold (5:4). The scene is reminiscent of Adoni-bezek debasing those he conquered by defacing their hands and feet (Jdg 1:7; also 1 Sam 17:54; 31:9f.). Wiggins, however, compares this episode with the practice in the Baal Cycle of collecting the hands (palms) and heads of conquered warriors.<sup>437</sup> Dagon has been humbled in battle in his own house, which YHWH has defiled.<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Ibid, 203–204.

<sup>436</sup> The Mesha inscription records the same type of thing: “And from there, I took th[e ves]sels of YHWH, and I hauled them before the face of Kemosh” COS 2.23, line 18. Also see the victory Stele of King Piye. “Sprinkle yourselves with water of his altars; kiss the earth before his face.” COS 2.7, line 34.

<sup>437</sup> S. A. Wiggins, “Old Testament Dagon in the Light of Ugarit,” VT 43 (1993): 270-71.

<sup>438</sup> Citing Exodus 12:8, 21 and Deut 6:9, Tsumura comments, “Temple threshold were considered especially worthy of respect because they separated sacred and common areas...the narrator makes the observation that the Philistines still to the time of the writing bear witness to their humiliation of their god.” D. T. Tsumura, 206.

In contrast, “YHWH’s *hand* was heavy on Ashdod,” and he struck them with plagues, recalling the plagues on the Egyptians (5:6). The ark is transferred to Gath and after Ekron (vv. 8–10). R. P. Gordon remarks, “As the ark moves on to Gath and then to Ekron (v. 10), the story begins to read like a parody of a victory tour, in which the roles of the victor and the vanquished are reversed.”<sup>439</sup> And after seven months, the Philistines returned the ark. While the practice of returning captured cult objects reflects the practices of Esarhaddon, Assurbanipal and Cyrus as an act of royal magnanimity and graciousness, the Philistines are forced to return the ark because of the fear of death (vv. 10–12).<sup>440</sup> The conquerors offer up a guilt offering (זָבַח) in hopes of being healed from the plagues of YHWH (6:4). Thus, the Philistines are forced to “give glory to the God of Israel YHWH” (וַתִּתְּנוּם לֵאלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּבוֹד, v. 6),<sup>441</sup> the God they thought they and their gods had conquered.

The return of the ark was no blessing to Israel, for YHWH was less kind to the Israelites, as he “made a great slaughter among them” (6:19). The reason for the episode is found in literary juxtaposition of AN to the following narrative. The cause is a key Deuteronomistic theme: Israel had abandoned YHWH by serving the Baals and Astartes (7:3–4). Samuel calls the Israelites to loyalty: “Be resolute in your decision to serve YHWH alone. Make firm your heart for YHWH and serve him alone, and he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines” (אֶל־יְהוָה וְעַבְדָּהוּ לְבָדֹד וְנִצַּל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד פִּלִּשְׁתִּים) (7:3). The Philistines attack again during the burnt offering, but YHWH delivers Israel because he favors her again. So, the Israelites set up a monument to

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<sup>439</sup> R. P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 100.

<sup>440</sup> Though the word הַמִּצְרָה is perhaps too general to be considered a parallel by itself in 1 Samuel 5:11, 11, it is interesting to note that it does parallel one of the curses in Deuteronomy 28:20.

<sup>441</sup> Possibly כְּבוֹד could have the sense of “tribute” or “payment.” T. S. Tsumura, 217. In either case, YHWH is being honored appropriately.

commemorate YHWH's deliverance and name it Ebenezer, because "up to now YHWH has helped us (עָזָרָנוּ)" (v. 12). The glory of Israel has returned, and Israel has a helper again. During the days of Samuel, Israel reigns supreme over the Philistines, and all of the land, which the Philistines had captured, was restored.

The theme of YHWH's leaving the land in the Deuteronomistic History will be literarily paralleled when David is exiled across the Jordan and in the Babylonian captivity, two episodes that would need to be explored in greater depth, though we do not have the space to do so here.<sup>442</sup> In any event, Israel's and YHWH's fates are one and the same. Both are humiliated warriors, and Israel remains the slave of the Philistines. The apex of YHWH's public humiliation comes when he is brought before Dagon to do obeisance. YHWH will win back the honor due him, as he needs no help to redeem his reputation when he defeats Dagon and the Philistines single-handedly.<sup>443</sup>

The theme of YHWH's honor is brought out even more boldly, however, at the beginning and end of the episode. The troops fear the reputation of YHWH who plagued (תַּפְּסִיחַ) the Egyptians (1 Sam 4:8). Their greatest fears are realized when he asserts his name and plagues them in their land (תַּפְּסִיחַ; 1 Sam 6:4). In fact, in 1 Samuel 6:6, when the Philistines are plagued, they say, "Why should you make your hearts proud (תִּכְבְּדוּ)<sup>444</sup> like the Egyptians and Pharaoh who made their hearts proud (כִּבְדוּ). After he

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<sup>442</sup> The connection between exile and humiliation is can be seen in many biblical texts (e.g., Gen 2–3; Isa 20:4; Jer 9:18). Nehemiah's prayer is a parade example (Neh 1:1–11). Writings of the Second Temple have the same view (e.g., Bar 3:8; Tob 3:4; 1 Esd; 8:77).

<sup>443</sup> Saul Olyan's discussion of honor brings out the importance of YHWH's plight: "In short, honor and shame communicate relative social status...Honor can be gained through military victory and lost through defeat and exile where it is replaced by shame. It is a commodity of value, actively sought both by deities and by human beings...Loss of honor or diminishment results in shame; diminishment communicates a loss of social status." S. M. Olyan, *Covenant*, 204.

<sup>444</sup> Possibly this phrase means "to dull the mind." Traditionally the translation of the Piel of כָּבַד is rendered as "harden," which we believe is the sense of the effect, not the cause. Our translation brings out the cause "pride."

had made sport (הִשְׂתַּחֲסֵם) of them, did not [the Philistines] send [the Israelites] out, and they went?" The verse parallels Exodus 10:1–2 (J),<sup>445</sup> which echoes these three themes: making one's heart (mind) proud, being made sport of, and the supremacy of YHWH. "YHWH said to Moses, ' Go to the Pharaoh because I have made his heart and (and the hearts) of his servants proud, so that I might show signs in their midst and so that you might tell your children and grandchildren how I have made sport (הִשְׂתַּחֲסֵם) <sup>446</sup> of the Egyptians and of the signs which I had done among them, so that you will know that I am YHWH!"<sup>447</sup> YHWH makes the Pharaoh and his officials believe themselves superior to demonstrate that he is actually superior. They are only his sport. Childs similarly notes, "The understanding of the plagues as a testimony to God's great power by which to make sport of mighty Pharaoh is at work."<sup>448</sup> Thus, YHWH forces the Philistines to recognize his reputation. Then, when Israel herself recognizes YHWH alone, repenting from serving of Baal and Astarte, YHWH blesses his people by freeing them from slavery to the Philistines. In this way, we can see how the sin-repentance-restoration cycle is inextricably tied to honor and shame from the standpoint of the covenantal blessings and curses.

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<sup>445</sup> Scholars differ widely with regard to the sources of 10:1–2. For example, Propp identifies this passage as E. W. Propp, *Exodus 1–18: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York : Doubleday, 1999), 290. Friedman views it as J. R. E. Friedman, *Who wrote the Bible?* (New York : Summit Books, 1987), 250. Childs believes that the verse reflects the interests of the Deuteronomistic redactor. Dtr<sup>R</sup> uses the "hardening" language of J, but the theology of P. B. S. Childs, *Exodus, a Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1974), 142.

<sup>446</sup> Durham notes that the Hithpael of שָׂחַ with the preposition בְּ denotes "occupying oneself...with or even against someone or something else." He translates the verb "amuse myself aggravating the Egyptians..." He cites in Number 22:29, 1 Samuel 31:4, Jeremiah 28:19, and Judges 19:25. Durham, 131–32.

<sup>447</sup> Durham believes that the assertion of YHWH plays on הָיָה to assert the existence or presence of YHWH. While this is possibly the case, the phrase "to know I am YHWH," appears more to be asserting the mere presence of YHWH, but even more the recognition of his might to bring about what he has expressly purposed (e.g., 1 Kings 20:13, 28; Isa 49:23; 51:15; Jer 32:27 (just "I am YHWH"); Ezek 6:10; 7:27).

<sup>448</sup> B. Childs, 142.

In summary, having seen how Deuteronomic concepts of honor and shame inform the covenantal bond and how they are reflected in the approach to one of the most dominant themes in the Deuteronomistic History, we now turn toward Israel's worship. And while some similar themes of this cycle appear there, we find that YHWH is shamed not just by his enemies, but also by Israel herself. That is, while the Deuteronomic covenant does not appear to spell out explicitly how this can be done, the *mutuality* of the covenantal bond implies that Israel too might shame YHWH when Israel perceives that her God has been loyal to his covenant obligations.

### 3.4 Deuteronomic honor and shame in the history and life of Israel: a psalm of lament

How Long, O God, will the enemy taunt?  
Will the foe revile your name forever? (Ps 74:10)

Bargaining with the gods in times of trouble is not rare for ancient or modern people. What is strange to modern ears is that the exilic or post-exilic Israelite community<sup>449</sup> that produced Psalm 74 attempts to coax God into action with neither flattery nor magic.<sup>450</sup> Instead, the psalmist attempts to motivate YHWH by publicly pointing out his shame before the nations. They ask him how long he can bear the enemy taunting (הִרְיָ)<sup>451</sup> him and reviling (נִאָּץ) his reputation (שֵׁם).<sup>452</sup> What is more is that even when the psalmist praises YHWH in verses 12–17, this only serves to highlight the deity's shame and to motivate him to fulfill his covenantal duties. The literary structure of the psalm confirms this strategy.

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<sup>449</sup> See H-J. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 96–97.

<sup>450</sup> K. Nielson, "Incense," *ABD* 3:406.

<sup>451</sup> For הִרְיָ as a shaming action, see Kutsch, "הִרְיָ *hrp* II" in *TDOT* V:211.

<sup>452</sup> On "name" as honor or reputation, see A. S. van der Woude, "שֵׁם" in *TLOT* 1356–57. Thus, YHWH's enemies are treating his reputation with contempt.



First, the psalmist draws YHWH's attention to his shame in verses 1–11.<sup>453</sup> Then he tries to rouse God's pride by rehearsing his *past* honor: He is the king of old (v. 12) who defeated dragons (v. 13), who established the great luminaries (v. 16), who set the boundaries of the earth (v. 17) and who established the seasons (v. 17).<sup>454</sup> Only after this recitation of YHWH's glorious past does the psalmist remind his God in verse 18 again how the enemy scoffs at him and the impious revile his reputation (תִּפְחֵן). Thus, this public declaration, moving from current shame to past honor to current shame, heightens God's precipitous fall into an ignoble position, and in so doing, tries to rouse YHWH into action.

This is not just a call for YHWH to regain his lost honor, but to remove his people's shame. His people's reputation is inextricably linked to his, and his reputation is bound to theirs (vv. 21–23). The psalmist says that God should not let his crushed people retreat humiliated (אַל־תִּשָּׁבֵךְ דָּךְ בְּכִלְיָם; v. 21).<sup>455</sup> What is at stake? Praise. It is the poor (his dove) who will praise his name, not the victorious foes (the animals) who constantly mock him (v. 23). As Broyles states, "The nation's problem is really God's."<sup>456</sup> Thus, he should take action and plead his case (v. 22), that is, to defend his name. In this way, the psalmist uses YHWH's shame to motivate him to act.

The importance of Israel's shame, and YHWH's, by implication, is that both are

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<sup>453</sup> His house has been destroyed (vv. 3, 5–7), his foes roar in his holy place (v. 3),<sup>453</sup> the place where his name dwelt has been defiled (v. 7).

<sup>454</sup> Of course, such praise also dually acts as a foretaste of what he might receive once he vindicates his name by defeating the enemy and saving his people. Also, we might note that what is affected here in Israel's eyes is not YHWH's *ascribed* honor, but his *acquired* honor.

<sup>455</sup> The reading of שָׁבֵךְ ("to return") is slightly awkward here, but it is support by all the versions (also see most commentators and translations). Tate, citing Dahood, reads שָׁבֵךְ ("to sit") with the Syriac. Such a reading is consistent with rights of those in mourning, where the humbled sit on the ground (e.g., Neh 1:4; Lam 2:10).

<sup>456</sup> C. C. Broyles, *Psalms* (NIBC 11; Peabody, MA: Carlisle, Cumbria: Hendrickson; Paternoster Press, 1999), 309.

tied closely to their covenantal relationship (v. 20). With regard to the community itself, Israel's honor is tied to receiving and obeying the commandment in the covenant.<sup>457</sup> Thus, because Israel is aware of no wrongdoing on her part that would have merited their shaming at the enemy's hands, she wonders why God is angry (v. 1b). Indeed, in some psalms, Israel's protests of innocence are even more forthright (Psalm 44, esp. v. 20). What confirms our reading is that the psalmist neither admits to nor repents of wrongdoing.<sup>458</sup>

The implication in Psalm 74 is that YHWH has ignored the covenant,<sup>459</sup> allowing his dove (דָּוִד; v. 19) to suffer reproach (חִרָה, v. 18) and the enemy to humiliate his people (כָּלָם; v. 21).<sup>460</sup> Thus, it is YHWH who must pay attention to the covenant (הִשָּׁמַע לְבְרִיתוֹ).<sup>461</sup> So, the psalmist calls for YHWH to “plead his cause” for his sullied reputation (name).<sup>462</sup> To do this, he must deliver his people from their enemies that seek to devour them (v. 18–19). In so doing, he will receive honor by silencing his enemy's taunts and by receiving

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<sup>457</sup> The agreement between YHWH and Israel is that in exchange for her obedience, they will be honored above all peoples (עַל כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְתַהַלָּה וּלְשֹׁם וּלְתַפְאֻרָתָהּ וּלְהִיטָרָהּ עַם-קָדֹשׁ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כֹּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר Deut 26:19).

<sup>458</sup> M. E. Tate. *Psalms 51–100* (WBC 20; Dallas, TX, Word Books, 1990), 253. Note that in comparison with Psalm 79, there is no penitential tone to this psalm (e.g., 79:8–9). Kraus puts it this way, “In the process [or asking YHWH to intervene] there is a constant reminder of the abuses and profanations that should long ago have moved Yahweh to intervene.” H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 101.

<sup>459</sup> Commenting on this type of feature in similar psalms, Jon Levenson states, “The failure of God is openly acknowledged: no smug faith here, no flight into another worldly ideal. But God is also *reproached* for his failure, told that it is neither inevitable nor excusable...[italics his].” J. D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*. Princeton paperbacks. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 24–25.

<sup>460</sup> The word “dove” here expresses fond affection (cf. Song 2:14; 5:2; 6:9; etc.).

<sup>461</sup> This is the only instance of the idiom לֹא + נָטָה. Normally, נָטָה is followed by אֵל (Exod 3:6; Num 21:9; 1 Sam 16:7; 2 Kgs 3:14; Isa 22:11; 51:1–2, 6; 66:2; Jonah 2:5; Hab 1:13; Zech 12:10; Ps 34:6). It usually means to “to look at” or “pay attention to.” In this context, the idea is that by paying attention (i.e., obeying) the covenant, God will raise himself and his people from shame. Note the use in Psalm 119:6, “Then I will not be put to shame (לֹא-אֶבֹּשׁ) when I pay attention to (אֶל) all of your commandments.”

<sup>462</sup> Our interpretation is confirmed by the fact that what is to motivate YHWH to argue his case is the reproach he suffers at the hands of fools (חִרָה מִיְּדֵי נָבָל).

praise from his oppressed people (v. 21).

Before showing one more example, we notice from this psalm that the values of shame and honor play out as a binary pair. The loss of honor brings shame, and the removal of shame is synonymous with regaining honor. Secondly, the fate of Israel and her God are intertwined. Both fall and stand together. Thus, to shame Israel is necessarily to shame her God, and while this would be true of other nations as well, the rules governing the shame-honor value system are governed by the Deuteronomic covenant in the eyes of the psalmist.

As was stated above, the foregoing discussion is not an isolated case. Psalm 79 provides a similar example of the same shame-honor interplay between Israel and her God as we found in Psalm 74. For example, the people have been defeated (vv. 2–3, 7); thus, they have become an object of derision (לַעֲנֵי וְקִלְסִים; v. 4). YHWH's house has been defiled and destroyed by the nations (טָמְאוּ אֶת־הַיְסוּדִל קְדֹשְׁךָ; v. 1), and as a result, YHWH's honor is cast into doubt through the taunt "Where is their God?" (v. 10)<sup>463</sup> The defeat and shame of Israel is the defeat and shame of YHWH. Thus, Hossfeld and Zenger accurately note that this psalm expresses "a public humiliation of YHWH before the forum of the other nations' gods."<sup>464</sup> The only way for YHWH to win glory for his reputation (כְּבוֹד) is to save his people (v. 9).

Unlike Psalm 74, however, in which Israel makes no claim to wrongdoing, in

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<sup>463</sup> For a much more comprehensive description of the similarities between these two psalms see Hossfeld and Zenger. F.-L. Hossfeld, E. Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100* (Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 305.

<sup>464</sup> F.-L. Hossfeld, E. Zenger, 304. Also see Marvin Tate, who understands it as a crisis of YHWH's glory. He states, "[Israel's] mockery is less of Israel's people than of Israel's God. The fact that the nation has been defeated and her people deported leads others to think that Israel's God has been defeated as well, that her much-vaunted special relationship with him has ended. To the nations, Israel is a people without king, nation, home, or deity." M. Tate, 301.

Psalm 79 YHWH's people (or kin)<sup>465</sup> have clearly dishonored him by being unfaithful to the covenant (79:8). Out of a jealous anger, he shames them by allowing the nations to spill the blood of the faithful and to mutilate their bodies (Ps 79:2-3).<sup>466</sup>

Aside from asking YHWH to forgive her sins (v. 9), the psalmist asks God to save Israel on several grounds: (1) YHWH has not known the other nations (v. 6);<sup>467</sup> (2) the enemies of Jacob have devoured him (v. 7, 11); and (3) Israel has been brought low (דָּלָה; v. 8). But there is one final reason, however, that looms large.

YHWH has been shamed before those outside his people (lit., nations that have not known him). The psalmist notes that forgiving them and being their savior, is for the sake of his glorious reputation (עַל־דָּבָר כְּבוֹד־שְׁמֶךָ; v. 9) because if he does not save them, the enemy will taunt, “Where is their God?” (cf. Joel 2:17).<sup>468</sup>

In a talionic judgment befitting of their savior, YHWH must avenge their blood (נָקָם; v. 10). The last three verses reiterate these same themes. YHWH should save the people (v. 11), return sevenfold (שִׁבְעָתַיִם... וְהָשִׁב) on the enemy the taunts (הִרְפָּתָה) that he

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<sup>465</sup> For YHWH as Israel's divine kinsman, see Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 6–7. Covenant is not explicitly mentioned in Psalm 79, but there are implicit linguistic indicators of it. YHWH is said to be motivated by jealousy (כַּנְזָאֲהָרָה), and his people are called הַסִּידִי. YHWH's jealousy for covenantal loyalty is found in Exod 20:5 and Deut 20:5. Ringgren following Engnell notes that הַסִּידִי can be defined as “covenant fellow.” H. Ringgren, *TDOT* 4:77.

<sup>466</sup> For the association of shame and death at the hands of one's enemies, see Psalm 31:17. Not surprisingly, then, shame and mutilation are related. See T. M. Lemos, “Shame and Mutilation.”

<sup>467</sup> The verb יָדַע contains Deuteronomistic covenantal associations, expressing the special relationship between YHWH and Israel, though Deuteronomy favors the term בָּהָר. Botterweck and Bergman, *TDOT* 468–69. For an opposing view, see Hossfeld and Zenger's translation: “who fail to know / acknowledge you.” F.-L. Hossfeld, E. Zenger, 302.

<sup>468</sup> The defeat of a nation necessarily implied the relative inferiority or weakness of that nation's god. Note the taunt of Rabshakeh to Israel, “...Do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, YHWH will deliver us. Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered its land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? *Where are the gods* of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of the countries have delivered their countries out of my hand, that YHWH should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?” (2 Kgs 18:32c–35; cf. Isa 36:19). In any event the statement is a jeer (Joel 2:17; Ps 42:11; cf. F.-L. Hossfeld, E. Zenger, 306) about the comparative impotence of YHWH (cf. Jer 2:28).

received (v. 12 [*talion*]), and, by doing these things, win honor from his people (v. 13).

We should note two final, but important, points. First, the psalm is chiefly concerned with how YHWH's reputation has been diminished in his and his people's defeat and also how he might regain his honor (via blood vengeance). Secondly, this concern for shame and honor is tied directly to covenant. For example, Israel's judgment is due to God's fierce jealousy (אֵשׁ קִנְיָאָה; v. 5). In covenantal contexts divine jealous is connected with Israel worshiping other gods (e.g., Exod 20:5, 14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:16, 21; in the Deuteronomistic History see 1 Kgs 14:22; 19:10, 14). Deuteronomy 4:24ff. depicts the community's current situation in Psalm 79. Moreover, Psalm 79:6–7 reflects Jeremiah 10:25. The latter passage has been placed directly before Jeremiah 11:1–10, which is a prophecy concerning covenant fidelity.<sup>469</sup>

Lastly, what emerges from this psalm is the judgment-repentance cycle that we see in the Deuteronomistic History when Israel commits idolatry. After a period of faithfulness, Israel violates the covenant by committing idolatry. YHWH sends in a nation to discipline Israel, Israel repents, and YHWH relents, by providing a deliverer for her. In this schema, cast as a legal relationship, YHWH stays outside the gravity of *legal* judgment. He is the judge. Viewed, however, through the eyes of eyes of honor and shame, he is brought into the orbit of *social* judgment and he himself becomes a participant in the cycle, not just an outside actor.

Thus, with regard to this cycle, we note the following: The people dishonor YHWH (usually through idolatry); he, as a result, brings shame upon his people by allowing another nation to subjugate them, thus, as their God he has brought shame

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<sup>469</sup> While it is true that chapters 10 and 11 are considered to be part of separate units, it would be difficult to assume that readers would have segmented the text as we do today, and read 10:25 as unrelated to 11:1ff. Literary placement seems to demand that we read the two passages in light of each other.

upon himself before the nations. There is even the implication that YHWH himself is unfaithful to the covenant because he allowed outsiders to conquer his people.<sup>470</sup>

Despite everything, the psalmists always confess that their deity possesses the power to regain his and their honor (v. 11); and he can only restore his and their honor by acting as his kin's blood avenger (v. 10).<sup>471</sup> Thus, in this cycle both YHWH and his people shame themselves and each other, and this complex is mediated by and expressed in terms of their covenantal relationship.

As mentioned, this same cycle appears in other contexts that assume a covenantal bond. For example, after the Philistines rout Israel, YHWH is forced to do obeisance before Dagon (1 Sam 5:2). Likewise, YHWH threatens the northern nation with Assyrian exile because she has acted like an adulterous wife towards YHWH (Hos 2:1-23; 4:7).<sup>472</sup> Lastly, the Babylonians strip YHWH's temple of its sacred objects, burn it, and then strip his people naked before leading them into exile (2 Kgs 25:9). In each case, the people's judgment is due to their covenantal disloyalty to YHWH, both YHWH and his people are reciprocally shamed in judgment, and there is a restoration of honor or a promise of it (2 Samuel 6, Hosea 6, and Deut 30:3-4, respectively).

YHWH's people attempt to motivate him by claiming that his enemy accuses him of having run from a fight or of having been overpowered, presumably by their

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<sup>470</sup> An interesting problem obtains here. YHWH is to be the redeemer of his people (his kin). In a kinship system, it would be unthinkable for kin to allow outsiders to the group to handle problems of judgment (so, Jdg 19ff.). Even in the case of guilt, outsiders were not to spill the blood of kin. Thus, YHWH's juridical actions treat Israel as an outsider.

<sup>471</sup> Cross points out that one of the important obligations of kinsman is blood vengeance. Cross, *Epic to Canon*, 7.

<sup>472</sup> Sherwood notes that YHWH in Hosea 1-3 is motivated by shame produced by competition with Ba'al. Y. Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea's Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective* (JSOTSup 212; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 212.

gods (v. 10; cf. 2 Kgs 18:32c–35).<sup>473</sup>

In summary, we find that YHWH, like Israel, is no less motivated by honor and shame, two values which lie at the opposite ends of the spectrum of social values. They are often depicted as high and low economic or military position and the prestige that comes with them. In this context and in the previous discussion of the Ark Narrative, YHWH's and Israel's honor are bound together. His honor is as much tied to military success as is Israel's, and in some ways, his is all the more. Because the enemy shamed YHWH and his kin,<sup>474</sup> he is required to restore the honor of his people through blood vengeance.<sup>475</sup> The same type of understanding of covenant loyalty can be seen working through the psalms.

### 3.5 Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, honor and shame are explicit, pivotal motivations for Israel to remain loyal to YHWH. And it is not in the borrowing from Hittite and Assyrian treaty forms that is as significant for us, but the points in which Israel adds their unique stamp on covenantal loyalty, honor and shame. There are no Hittite treaties promising pre-eminence for obedience, and Israel's covenant with YHWH does this three times in the small blessing section. Likewise, the curse section which was likely adapted from Assyrian treaties and which contains content and structural parallels to the blessing section, has the express purpose of shaming Israel, by making her the lowest of all nations in power and prestige. She will not only become economically inferior, but militarily too. Israel will sink lower than a resident alien, and

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<sup>473</sup> F.-L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, 304.

<sup>474</sup> For YHWH as Israel's divine kinsman, see F. M. Cross, *Epic to Canon*, 6–7.

<sup>475</sup> Cross points out that one of the important obligations of kinsman is blood vengeance, *Ibid*, 7.

even when they are deported, she will even be beneath the common slave. In this way, we can see how important such values were to Israel in her covenant with YHWH. Thus, using our results from chapter 2, we have seen that, though honor and shame are not explicitly expressed using traditionally identified vocabulary (כבוד, בוש, חרף, בלם, etc.), the concepts are present as high and low position and are key to understanding the values of the Deuteronomic conception of suzerain-vassal loyalty. And we are also able to see how these concepts could be embedded within later sources that Deuteronomistic writers utilized to motivate Israel to greater fidelity in a way that we do not explicitly see in treaties in the ancient Near East.

In our next chapter, we will treat two concepts that appear in germinal form in Deuteronomy, but emerge as central concerns in the Deuteronomistic history, king and cult. As we will see, to the Deuteronomist, the dishonorable character of the northern royal and priestly houses leads them to treat YHWH with disregard in the cult, the place where the deity should be most honored. As a result, YHWH chooses David and Zadok, who honor the deity and who receive eternal prestige and preeminence. As we will see, prominent in the Deuteronomistic presentation of honor and shame are the semantic contrasts represented by קלל/כבוד and נשפל/רום.



## Chapter 4: Shame and Everlasting Honor in Deuteronomistic Conception of the Davidic Covenant

### 4.0 Introduction

In chapter 2, we outlined the semantics of biblical honor and shame and explored several semantic concepts: importance versus unimportance (inconsequentiality), loftiness and lowness, making or having a valuable or great name, and various “shame” vocabulary (e.g., בושׁ, חרף, כלם, etc.). Generally speaking, we saw that various concepts of honor could be used to describe high positions or esteemed character. And “shame” was, among other things, the loss of position or esteem, often depicted as death. We noticed that these values were applied in biblical Israel to all areas of Israelite life: family relations, moral or immoral conduct, military victory or loss, peaceful and belligerent international relations. We will find all of these at play in our current chapter.

In chapter 3, we showed how honor and shame, when understood as high and low military and economic status and esteem among the nations was integral to Israel’s understanding of covenantal loyalty to YHWH. YHWH honored Israel with pre-eminent military and economic position for her exclusive fidelity to him (vv. 1, 13–14). He would set them “high above all of the nations of the earth” (v. 1; cf. Deut 26:19). Economically, he would bless his people with fecundity (of crops, children and livestock), military dominance and economic superiority. In this way, Israel would become the “head” and the nations the “tail” (28:13). The nations would become economic dependents or patrons of Israel’s bounty, fearing Israel’s might (v. 13).

Conversely, shame was depicted as low status and esteem. If Israel dishonored YHWH through their disloyalty, she would suffer a multitude of shaming judgments that would render them inconsequential, if not socially non-existent. Among the many

curses described in chapter 28, YHWH would destroy Israel's fruitfulness (vv. 15–18), cause her to suffer defeat (vv. 19, 25, 52–53) and allow his people to suffer complete economic devastation (v. 44). In short, the nations would become the “head” and Israel the “tail” (v. 44). In the end, YHWH would make his people lower than the “riff raff,” a slave that no one desired to purchase (v. 68). Thus, honor, defined as high position with its military and economic associations, operated as the proverbial “carrot,” and, inconsequentiality was the “stick” to incite Israel's exclusive loyalty to YHWH.

The task of the current chapter is to fill the gap in biblical scholarship regarding the Davidic covenant. While 2 Samuel 7 is one of the most studied passages in the Hebrew Bible, no scholar has sought to understand how honor and shame relate to the Deuteronomistic presentation of the Davidic covenant.<sup>476</sup> Thus, this chapter will have two major goals. First, we will discuss how honor and shame are defined in the narratives that chronicle the fall of the royal and priestly houses of the north and the rise of the respective houses in the south, which culminates YHWH's honoring David with the promise of a temple and eternal dynasty.<sup>477</sup> Secondly, we will analyze how these social values are defined in and inform the Davidic Covenant. In particular, we will see that one benefit of socio-literary criticism is that it can better explain YHWH's rejection of David's attempt to build YHWH a temple.

The first task is complicated for two interrelated reasons. First, the deuteronomistic historian embeds the promises to David in the narrative of Samuel–

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<sup>476</sup> Though Olyan and Stansell treat various passages concerning David in their articles, neither speak about 2 Samuel 7, David's ultimate honoring.

<sup>477</sup> Concomitant with the loss of northern royal and priestly honor is also the loss of prestige for northern cult sites of Shiloh (Psa 78:60; Jer 7:12; 26:6–9) and later Gibeon. According to the Deuteronomist, Gibeon was the “chief high place” (הַמָּקוֹם הַגָּדוֹל) in Israel in the time of Solomon (1 Kgs 3:4). It is the site, in fact, where YHWH appears to Solomon and grants him great wisdom (v. 5). We will, however, not focus on the relationship between holy space and prestige.

Kings, which is a Deuteronomistic attempt to legitimize the shift of power and honor from the northern priestly and royal houses of Eli and Saul to the new, faithful southern houses of Zadok<sup>478</sup> and David.<sup>479</sup> As such, we will be more concerned with how the

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<sup>478</sup> Because our argument regarding the migration of power and prestige from the north to south rests on David and Zadok's southern origins, we must address the issue of Zadok's genealogy, although we do not have space to treat the subject as adequately as it deserves. Of the various positions scholars have proposed regarding Zadok's origin, we cautiously favor Cross and Haran's solution that Zadok is from an Aaronide line from Hebron, though this position is not without its own difficulties (see Olyan). We should point out that three of the major solutions to Zadok's origins as represented by Rowley and Hauser (Jebus), Cross and Haran (Hebron) and Olyan (Kabzeel in the Negev) are "southern" in orientation.

In brief, the problem with Zadok's genealogy, as has been widely recognized, is that, on the one hand, we are told that Zadok is the son of Ahitub (2 Sam 8:17), Ichabod's brother (1 Sam 14:3), making Zadok the brother of Ahimelech and uncle to Abiathar (1 Sam 22:20; contra 2 Sam 8:17). On the other hand, (presumably) the same narrator attempts to demonstrate how Zadok's house came to supersede Eli's house (1 Sam 2:27–36; cf. 1 Kgs 2:26–27). Moreover, the Chronicler traces Zadok's line through Aaron's son Eleazar (1 Chron 5:29–34 and 6:35–38), contrasting it with Abiathar's lineage through Aaron's son Ithamar (1 Chron 24:3).

First, most scholars view these latter lineages in Chronicles as a late attempt to give Zadok Aaronide ancestry, though different from that of Eli. In addition, they have suffered corruption. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 212. Thus, since the time of Wellhausen, most scholars have focused on 2 Samuel 8:17, seeing it as corrupt and reconstructing it: "Zadok and Abiathar son of Ahimelech, son of Ahitub," leaving Zadok without a lineage. G. W. Ramsay, "Zadok (person)," *ABD* 6:1034. In sum, commentators have postulated various origins for Zadok.

The first two of the following views give Zadok a northern origin. Auerbach posited that Zadok came from Gibeon (cf. 1 Chr 16:39). See E. Auerbach, *Das Aharon-Problem*, *VTSup* 17:37–63. The passage in question, however, only associates Zadok with Gibeon at one point in his career, without stating that he originated from there. Karl Budde proposed that the proper name *ʾahyô* in 2 Samuel 6:3–4 should be repointed as *ʾāhîw* "his brother," whom Budde identifies as Zadok. Thus, Eleazar, son of Abinadab, is Uzzah, according to 1 Samuel 7:1. K. Budde, "Die Herkunft Šadoqs," *ZAW* 52 (1934): 42–50. The main problem with Budde's suggestion, as Ramsay points out, is placing Zadok in the same generation as Eleazar and at a time of the Ark's capture would make is very unlikely that he would be serving "as a co-priest with Abiathar, whose great-uncle Ichabod (cf. 1 Sam 14:3; 22:20) was born at the time of the Ark's capture (1 Sam 4:19–21)," a career of over sixty years. Ramsay, *ABD* 6:1034.

The remaining three solutions by Rowley and Hauser, Cross and Haran, and Olyan, see Zadok as having southern origins, Rowley and Hauser believe Zadok is from Jebusite stock, while Cross-Haran and Olyan argue that he is from Aaronide stock. Cross and Haran posit that Zadok is from Hebron, while Olyan argues that the priest is from Kabzeel in the Negev. See H. H. Rowley, *Zadok and Nehushtan* *JBL* 58 (1939): 113–41, esp. 130–132. J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.; Louisville; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 178–79. F. M. Cross, 214. While many scholars have followed the Jebusite hypothesis, we believe that Cross, followed by Olyan, has decisively undermined the probability of this view. M. Haran, "Studies in the Account of the Levitical Cities, II," *JBL* 80, no. 2 (1961): 160–61. S. Olyan, "Zadok's Origins and the Tribal Politics of David," *JBL* 101, no. 2 (1982): 178, n. 3. For our purposes, what is important to note is that of the two remaining viable views, Cross's and Olyan's, are *southern* solutions.

<sup>479</sup> Implicit in our approach is also the loss of status in the northern cult site to Jerusalem, though we do not have space to pursue a discussion of honor and public space.

Deuteronomist wanted the Davidic covenant to be understood in the scope of his history, as opposed to how the covenant might have been originally understood and developed through the history of Israel. As we will see, the reason that the northern centers of power lose their favored position, according to the Deuteronomist, is because they treated YHWH with low regard in the cult, the place where he should be publicly honored.<sup>480</sup> As a result, the deity makes both the northern priestly and royal houses eternally קלל (“inconsequential, of little account”).<sup>481</sup> Under the Davidic promises, the honor is understood as *pre-eminent esteem and eternal legitimization* (position).<sup>482</sup> Though shame is not explicitly part of the Davidic covenant, the Deuteronomist understands the discipline in 2 Samuel 7:14 as including shame, which can include a loss of power, position and prestige. We will, however, argue that the editor of Samuel–Kings represents the discipline of the northern priestly and royal houses the *eternal* diminishment of power and prestige.

Secondly, for the narrator, treating YHWH with low regard is a matter of one’s character, or to put it in biblical terms, “heart.”<sup>483</sup> For Eli’s narrative, the concept of bad heart is tied to Eli’s diminishing sight. With respect to the kingship, YHWH selects David, not because of *visible* qualities like height (Saul and Eliab) that people mistakenly

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<sup>480</sup> This is represented by the roots בזה and נאץ in 2 Samuel 2:30 and קלל in 1 Samuel 3:13.

<sup>481</sup> One might recall that we demonstrated in chapter 2 on the vocabulary of honor and shame that these themes were marked in the case of Eli’s house (1 Sam 2:30), but unmarked with regard to Saul’s house, though present nonetheless.

<sup>482</sup> By using the word “eternal,” we do not mean to touch upon the conditionality/un-conditionality debate. After all, YHWH had promised that Eli’s ancestral line that they would serve him forever (1 Sam 2:30), but revoked that promise when Eli’s sons despised him (בזה) and Eli honored them above YHWH (1 Sam 2:30).

<sup>483</sup> In addition referring to the bodily organ, the לב describes “physical, psychological, and intellectual functions...” See F. Stolz, “*lēb* heart,” *TLOT*, n.p. Part of the heart’s intellectual function is perception. When used with שיה (Exod 7:23; 1 Sam 4:20), שיה (Exod 9:21; 1 Sam 21:13) or נתן (Eccl 1:13) it means to “take note of.”

use to judge the suitability of a leader, but because of his “heart” (1 Sam 16:7), which YHWH alone can assess. Thus, we will see a large contrast between what humans see and what YHWH does. For example, David and Saul’s “hearts” come into sharp contrast in the Goliath story where Saul has “lost heart” (1 Sam 17:32) and David is emboldened by his concern with YHWH and Israel’s honor (17:26). In Samuel 2:34–36, the man of God alludes to Zadok as one “who will act according to what is in my heart and my intentions” (כַּאֲשֶׁר בִּלְבָבִי וּבְנַפְשִׁי יַעֲשֶׂה). In short, only YHWH can choose the royal and priestly houses that are marked with the character that can honor the deity’s desires (1 Sam 2:35; 1 Kgs 3:6).

We will begin by following the gradual loss of status of the northern priestly and royal houses, which are adumbrated in the Song of Hannah and which come to fruition in the construction of the temple and deposing of Abimelech by Solomon. Finally, we will discuss the relevance of honor and shame to the Davidic promises.

#### 4.1 What you see is not what you get: The status exchange of the northern and southern royal and priestly houses

Though the interests of the priesthood are secondary to those of the kingship in Samuel–Kings, the Davidic promises have two institutions embedded in them, one relating to the king’s house and the other to YHWH’s house. In this way, the fates of both institutions are intertwined. In fact, all houses eventually survive or end because of their relationship to David’s house. Eli’s house, for example, survived because of Abiathar’s fidelity to David (e.g., 2 Sam 15:24; 1 Kgs 2:26), only to end because of the priest’s unfaithfulness to the rightful Davidide, Solomon (1 Kgs 2:25–27). As the text of 1 Samuel now stands, the reversal of honor that occurs between the southern and northern priestly and royal households begins with the birth narrative of Samuel, the prophet-priest-judge *par excellence*. He will carry the second oracle against the house of

Eli, depose the northern house of Saul, and anoint David to replace Saul. Thus, it makes sense to start our discussion there with the fall of the northern priesthood.

As we will see, the text as it now stands uses Hannah and her son Samuel as foils for Eli and his sons, interweaving the themes of seeing, heart and honor. These themes will continue to dominate throughout the David-Saul narrative. When all is said and done, YHWH will honor a faithful royal household who will build his temple and honor a faithful priestly house who will serve him and his chosen king (2 Sam 7).

#### 4.1.1 Heart, hatred and sight: The houses of Eli and Zadok

The Book of Samuel opens with the tale of the barren Hannah. The narrative is cast in the same form as the birth accounts involving Sarah, Rachel, Hagar, Leah and Samson;<sup>484</sup> but in the scope of Samuel, the Hannah-Eli narrative has greater functions than setting up the plot in a dramatic way. One of those purposes is to highlight how YHWH raises the social status of faithful, lowly individuals and lowers the prestige of the unfaithful elite, themes that will frame the David-Saul narratives.<sup>485</sup>

As we noted, the delegitimizing of the northern priestly line is shaped by the theme of “heart.” We see the heart of the lowly, childless Hannah who vows to honor

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<sup>484</sup> The following summary is excerpted from R. Klein, “The Song of Hannah,” *CTM* 41 (1970): 680–81. (1) The barren woman is her husband’s favorite, although he has another “wife” by the whom he has had children; (2) The fruitful wife lords it over the barren one; (3) The barren woman is often old; (4) The birth comes in answer to prayer; (5) The announcement comes by a messenger-angel; (6) God’s kindness is expressed by the word “he remembered her;” (7) The child born is always a son; (8) The mother dedicates him (sometimes as a Nazirite) to God. Like many biblical tropes, however, not all of these stories display every element in the preceding list.

<sup>485</sup> The end of the Book of Judges ends with a reference to kingship (Jdg 21:25); the inserted material in 1 Samuel 2:9–10 contains a clear reference to kingship; and the judgment on Eli’s house also contains a reference to kingship (2:35). Despite Samuel’s negative assessment of kingship in 1 Samuel 7, the narrator has invited his readers to associate the events of 1 Samuel 1–4 with the institution of the kingship. In fact, we will see how the key events in these chapters parallel the rise and fall of the houses of David and Saul, respectively.

YHWH with her most important possession,<sup>486</sup> should YHWH bless her (v. 2 [post blessing]). Conversely, the priest Eli, who had been honored with *two* sons and a special position to minister before the deity, uses his position to steal the choicest sacrifices. For Eli, “heart” is also underscored by the theme of having “bad eyes,”<sup>487</sup> which marks four important junctures in 1 Samuel 1–4: the misjudgment of Hannah’s character by Eli, the rightful judgment of Eli’s house by the man of God, the second judgment of Eli’s house by Samuel and the consummation of judgment at Eli’s death at the city gate. What we will show is that the loss of honor of Eli’s house is occasioned by the gradual loss of his eyesight, symbolizing the priest’s corrupt heart that leads to the execution of judgment on his house and begins the loss of status of the north.<sup>488</sup>

First Samuel 1–4 sets up three interrelated contrasts that will eventually lead to the choice of Zadok as YHWH eternal priestly house: how YHWH sees versus how Eli

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<sup>486</sup> The firstborn (and only) son is the most valuable. When Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac, YHWH’s messenger stops him and says, “...now I know that you are a fearer of God (read: honor). You did not withhold your son, your only son from me.”

<sup>487</sup> According to Malina and Rohrbaugh, Mediterranean peoples conceptualized the human personality in three “zones.” “The zone of emotion-fused thought includes will, intellect, judgment, personality, and feeling all rolled together. It is the activity of the eyes and heart (sight, insight, understanding, choosing, loving, thinking, valuing, etc.).” B. Malina and R. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospels* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 56. They add later, “When people became blind, darkness proceeded from their eyes, indicating something amiss with the heart. As noted above (5:15) darkness was an objectively present reality—the presence of dark and not the absence of light, as it is for us. Light is the presence of light.” Ibid, 65. We believe this construction of the human personality seems to be true of the Bible as well. The “heart” and “eyes” appear together in forty passages. Often we see “eyes” and “heart” used in expressions about the same states of human experience. In Numbers 15:39, Israelites are to wear a tassel so that they remember YHWH’s commandments and do not “look after your hearts and your eyes (עֵינֶיכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי לִבְכֶּם).” In Deuteronomy 28:65, the eyes express the fear of the heart: “a trembling heart, failing eyes, and despairing spirit” (וְכָלֶיִן עֵינַיִם וְרָאבוֹן נֶפֶשׁ). In Deuteronomy 28:65, the eyes express the fear of the heart: “a trembling heart, failing eyes, and despairing spirit” (וְכָלֶיִן עֵינַיִם וְרָאבוֹן נֶפֶשׁ). The same unanimity between the heart and eyes can be seen in a range of good and evil human experience: in human sadness (1 Sam 2:33; Psa 38:11), humility (Psa 131:1), arrogance (Prov 15:30), desire for unjust gain (Jer 22:17) and pride/delight (Ezek 24:21, 25). In fact, in Lamentations 5:17, hopelessness is depicted as a mourning heart and blind eyes (הִשְׁכֵּחַ עֵינָיו). There is no fear of God before the heart and eyes of the wicked (Psa 36:2). Moreover, the child is to learn with heart and eyes (Prov 23:26). And lastly, according to the Chronicler, YHWH’s heart and eyes will be in the temple (2 Chron 7:16).

<sup>488</sup> If we may assume that the narrator shares the same view as J, then blindness is from God (Exod 4:11).

sees; the faithful character of Hannah versus the unfaithful character of Eli; and the resultant honoring of Samuel over the sons of Eli. The results are devastating: YHWH will diminish Eli by honoring Hannah's prayer (raising up her son).

The story begins by focusing on the distress of Hannah's heart that was occasioned by the severe provocation of Peninnah (1:6). Seeing Hannah weeping, Elkanah asks her, "Why is your heart troubled (וְלִמָּה יָרַע לְבָבָהּ)?"<sup>489</sup> The combination of רַע and לְבָב is used four times in the Bible, three times to denote some type of ill motive: begrudging giving (Deut 15:10), David's supposed arrogant desire to watch the battle with the Philistines (1 Sam 17:28 [MT and LXX<sup>A</sup>]) and the condition of the human heart (Eccl 9:3). Ironically, it was the taunting of rivals—Goliath and Peninnah, respectively—that troubled the hearts of David and Hannah.<sup>490</sup> Eli, however, believed that Hannah's heart was רַע in a negative sense, though she was actually deeply troubled as denoted by the phrases in verses 15–16, "bitter of spirit" (מִרְתָּה נֹכֶשׁ), "hard of day" (LXX σκληρὰ ἡμέρα)<sup>491</sup> and being abundant in complaining and vexation (מְרֹב שִׁיחַי וְכַעֲסִי).

In verse 13, while Hannah is speaking to herself in prayer, that is, *to her heart* (מִדְּבַרְתָּ עַל-לִבָּהּ),<sup>492</sup> she asks for YHWH to *see* "the misery of [his] maidservant" (בְּעֵינֵי אֲמָתְךָ).

<sup>489</sup> P. K. McCarter and A. Graeme Auld understand the phrase as some type of ill motive. McCarter renders the passage "Why are you so resentful?" P. K. McCarter, *I Samuel*, 49. And Auld renders it, "Why are your thoughts bad?" A. G. Auld, *First and Second Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 21. Because Hannah is weeping, it seems best to see the phrase as indicating sadness (cf. ASV, ESV, NAS, NIV, JPS, KJV). Especially convincing is Driver's and Klein's discussions. S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 11. R. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 1.

<sup>490</sup> Sirach 47:4 says, "In his youth, did David not kill a giant (Heb: גִּבּוֹר; Gk: γίγαντα) and took away eternal disgrace (Heb: עוֹן לֵוָה; though Gk: ὀνειδισμὸν ἐκ λαοῦ), when he slung a stone in a sling, and struck down the boasting/glory of Goliath (Heb: תִּפְאָרֶת גִּלְיָת; Gk: γαυρίαμα τοῦ Γολιάθ)?"

<sup>491</sup> Read against the MT קִשְׁת־דָּוִד with the LXX and with most commentators (cf. Job 30:25).

<sup>492</sup> Even though many of the phrases in our analysis are common idioms (e.g., מִדְּבַרְתָּ עַל-לִבָּהּ), they indicate how YHWH's faithful are often misjudged. For example, in 1 Sam 17:28 (MT and LXX<sup>A</sup>), Eliab wrongly accuses David being motivated by arrogance (וַדּוֹן) and a bad heart (רַע לְבָבָהּ) of coming to battle front to see the battle (רָאִיתָ הַמִּלְחָמָה יְרֵדָתָהּ). In fact, David is presented as only caring about the honor of



(רָאָה תְּרָאָה). When YHWH does, her heart exalts in her God (2:1). In verse 12, however, when Eli *observes* her mouth (וַיַּעַל שִׁמְרֵ אֶת־פִּיהָ),<sup>493</sup> which is moving but without sound (v. 13), he wrongly regards her as a drunk (וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ עָלָי לְשֹׁכְרָה), though she has had no strong drink (v. 15). The irony, of course, is that she has just dedicated her son in verse 11 (should YHWH grant her request) as a Nazirite who would never touch strong drink (4QSAM<sup>a</sup>, LXX: וַיִּזֵּן וּשְׁכָר לֹא יִשְׁתֶּה). Hannah begs the priest not to consider her a “worthless woman” (אֶל־תִּתֵּן אֶת־אֲמִתְךָ לִפְנֵי בַת־בְּלִיעַל; v. 16), which is in contrast to Eli’s who sons are “worthless men” (וַיִּבְנֵי עָלָי בְּנֵי בְלִיעַל; 2:12) who “have no regard for YHWH” (לֹא יָרְעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה). Such is the contrast between the honorable character of Hannah, who is in a dishonorable position, and the dishonorable character of those in positions of honor. In fact, the priest would have to learn about his son’s deeds from widespread reports (2:22).<sup>494</sup> That is, while Hannah dedicated her only son to YHWH<sup>495</sup> and given YHWH a generous offering (v. 24),<sup>496</sup> Eli and his sons had been stealing the choice parts of

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YHWH and his army (v. 26). As we will see later, the same can be said of Samuel’s assumption that Eliab would be YHWH’s anointed based on his height (16:7).

<sup>493</sup> R. P. Gordon believes that Eli’s eyesight had faded by this point; however, the text does not indicate this. In fact, it seems to indicate that his eyesight did not start growing dim until Samuel was in his service (1 Sam 3:2). R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 75. Thus, what is in view is his bad judgment.

<sup>494</sup> Hophni and Phinehas’ shameful acts against YHWH and Israel were widely known (2:14, 23). Either the priest was blind to their ways (depending on widespread reports to inform him about his children) or turned a blind eye to them until the public outcry became too much and he needed to address them. In either case, he does not discipline his sons properly when he rebukes them. As YHWH says, “you honor your sons more than me” (v. 29).

<sup>495</sup> The willingness to sacrifice her son for YHWH’s service is a demonstration of her devotion to the deity and her fear (respect) for him (cf. Gen 22:16–18). Such an account is crucial, to demonstrate that YHWH has elected Samuel over the blind Eli as the trustworthy receptor of divine revelation, the one who would later anoint YHWH’s beloved king. Levenson notes, “One function of [stories of heroic figures who are born outside the course of nature to barren mothers] is to legitimate the special status of the person to whom miraculous birth is attributed. His authority is not something that he has usurped: a gracious providence has endowed him with it...” J. D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 205.

<sup>496</sup> See Genesis 15:9. See also R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 78; E. A. Speiser, “The Nuzi Tablets Solve a Puzzle in the Books of Samuel,” *BASOR* 72 (1938): 15–17.

sacrifices. In fact, the man of God in 1 Samuel 2:29 will accuse Eli and his sons of “looking upon” YHWH sacrifices with a “selfish eye” (4QSam<sup>a</sup>, LXX: צרה עין] בזבחי ובמנחת [צרה עין] “and fattening themselves on the choicest parts (לְהַבְרִיאָכֶם מִרְאשֵׁי כָל־מִנְחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּי) (תביט)<sup>497</sup> and fattening themselves on the choicest parts (לְהַבְרִיאָכֶם מִרְאשֵׁי כָל־מִנְחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּי), which were dedicated to YHWH. The Hannah-Eli episode ends as the priest Eli finally recognizes Hannah’s earnestness and blesses her, a blessing that would lead to the birth of the boy who would pronounce the fall of Eli’s house. The comforted Hannah departs in 1 Samuel 1:18 with the words “Let your servant find favor in your sight (שְׂפָתַי תִּהְיֶה חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ) (תִּקְפָּץ),” a common idiom, though not without a note of irony from the perspective of the narrator. YHWH remembers Hannah and grants her request (1:20).<sup>498</sup> As a result, Hannah honors YHWH in a song of thanksgiving (2:1–10), which emphasizes the lowering of those in high positions and the raising of those in low positions.<sup>499</sup>

Our argument rests on a negative assessment of Eli’s “sight,” but one must wonder whether Eli should be blamed for misjudging Hannah so badly. On the one hand, the festive atmosphere perhaps gave rise to odd drunken behavior of many. Perhaps Hannah in her extreme state of grief appeared to be one of the partygoers. On

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<sup>497</sup> We follow McCarter’s translation. P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 86. The LXX adds “a shameless eye” (ἀναιδεῖ ὀφθαλμῷ), which the editors of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> have reasonably reconstructed as צרה עין] based on the probable talionic judgment צר והבטת צר in 1 Samuel 2:32. Louw and Nida \*ἀναιδε– with a “lack of sensitivity.” For example, they define the feminine noun ἀναιδεῖα as “a lack of sensitivity to what is proper—insolence, audacity, impudence, shamelessness.”

<sup>498</sup> We will analyze the Song of Hannah in our discussion below, but for now we note, as most scholars do, that the poem comes from a separate source that was inserted into chapter 2, perhaps at the point of its redaction, perhaps somewhat later. All of the major witnesses frame the Song differently. The LXX and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> contains the words καὶ κατέλιπον αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ ἐνώπιον κυρίου and [זה]בזעתי after the song, 4QSam<sup>a</sup> before it, and the MT lacks the sentence altogether. Possibly the phrase dropped out the MT due to homioarchton ([והשתח[ו]ו...והעזב[ו]הו]. What is clearer is that the poem itself suggests that it was composed at a time in which the monarchy still existed. In any case, our purpose is not to understand the purported history of the sources or their pre-redactional uses. As every major witness contains Hannah’s Song, it is our purpose to understand how the unanimously received tradition is best understood given its general context. And for now, we merely note that in its present forms, the song is meant to apply to the characters in the text, and Hannah is the most immediate character who is considered faithful (יְשֻׁמֶר) [Q] תְּסִידִי (v. 9).

<sup>499</sup> In the immediate context, the poem, which was later added to the text, applies to Hannah. But as we will argue, applies to Eli and Saul.

the other hand, the text describes Hannah as “weeping bitterly” (1:10), something Elkanah had seen previously and responded to in a much more understanding way (v. 8).<sup>500</sup> Given the contrast between human and divine judgment that we have seen in the Book of Samuel (the contrast between heart and sight), Eli’s misjudgment at this point should probably be seen in much the same light as Samuel’s misjudgment in 1 Samuel 16. Samuel understandably, but humanly, believes Eliab is YHWH’s anointed based on his stature,<sup>501</sup> but must be corrected that YHWH is looking at the heart. Eli’s presumptuously and quite harshly condemned Hannah, even without apology when it became quite clear that he was in error (v. 14).<sup>502</sup> His harsh condemnation is to be contrasted with Elkanah’s gentler question, “Why do you weep?” (v. 8). Though the priest never asks her plight, he (blindly?) blesses the woman whose child will remove him of his position of honor and replace him as Israel’s judge and as a trustworthy purveyor of YHWH’s revelation.

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<sup>500</sup> We agree with Philip Esler who rejects the thinking of scholars like Yairah Amit, Lillian Klein, Carol and Meyers who attempt to paint Elkanah in a negative light. Contra Amit, Elkanah gives Hannah a special portion (אֶחָד מִן הַזֵּבִים) because he “favors” (אָהַב) Hannah *despite her barrenness*. In addition, Hannah’s tears follow from Peninnah’s severe taunting and precede Eli’s question that is obviously designed to comfort her distress (vv. 6–8). Indeed, he is concerned that she has not eaten. Moreover, against Klein, the conflict between the wives is not caused by Elkanah’s special gift. Peninnah severely vexed her rival because “YHWH had closed her womb” (v. 5). Meyers is more generous in her assessment of Elkanah, though she also locates grief in receiving only one sacrificial portion. P. F. Esler, “The Role of Hannah in 2 Samuel 1:1–2:21: Understanding a biblical narrative in its ancient context,” in *Kontexte Der Schrift* (Edited by E. Stegemann, G. Gelardini, W. Stegemann, and C. Strecker; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), 30–31. Y. Amit, “‘Am I Not More Devoted to You Than Ten Sons?’ (1 Samuel 1:8): Male and Female Interpretations,” in *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings* (Edited by A. Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 74–75. L. Klein, “Hannah: Marginalized Victim and Social Redeemer,” in Brenner, 84; and C. Meyers, “Hannah and her Sacrifice: Reclaiming Female Agency,” in Brenner, 93–94. For a less critical feminist view of Elkanah, see J. E. Cook, *Hannah’s Desire, God’s Design: Early Interpretations of the Story of Hannah* (JSOTSup 282; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

<sup>501</sup> From a human perspective, Samuel seems quite justified in thinking that Eliab would be YHWH’s choice. YHWH had previously chosen Saul, a man of stature. Goliath, the Philistine champion, is a man of great stature. The next king would have to go up against him. Lastly, the Israelite in Genesis 6:4 [J?] contains the account of the Nephilim who were heroes (הַגִּבּוֹרִים), men of renown (אֲנָשֵׁי הַשֵּׁם) and “giants” to the Israelites (Num 13:33; LXX also γίγαντες). Thus, the LXX tradition renders גִּבּוֹרִים as “giants” (γίγαντες, Gen 6:4; γίγαντες, Num 13:33).

<sup>502</sup> As Sirach 13:3 says, “A rich person afflicts and must be honored (יִתְהַוָּה); the poor are harmed and must ask for grace (יִתְהַנֶּן).”

After the man of God condemns Eli's household as having a "selfish eye," the theme of sight reoccurs at another important juncture: when Eli begins to experience the loss of his prestige before YHWH. We are told in 1 Samuel 3:1 that, "...the word of YHWH came rarely in those days;<sup>503</sup> visions were not issued (אין הוּוּן נִפְרָץ)." <sup>504</sup> Ralph Klein notes that a lack of prophecy is a curse in Amos 8:11–12 (cf. Psa 74:9; Lam 2:9; Mic 3:6ff.).<sup>505</sup> In the immediate context, this would imply that the curse is on Eli. In the very next verse, the narrator informs us that Eli's "eyes had begun to grow dark" and "he was not able to see" (וְעֵינָיו הָחִלּוּ כְהוּת לֹא יוּכַל לִרְאוֹת [Q]). The loss of Eli's sight is actual but symbolizes his prophetic blindness, as the rest of the narrative is not informed by this fact. What also adds weight to this suggestion is that in verse 4 the word of YHWH comes to Samuel. In fact, Samuel is within hearing-range of Eli, yet Eli is not able to hear the voice of YHWH speaking. Thus, the text signals that Samuel will be YHWH's new trustworthy mediator of revelation, which he quickly becomes (3:20).<sup>506</sup>

Two more ironies occur in the text. Samuel's first prophetic act is designed to reiterate YHWH's judgment against Eli's house (vv. 11–14). Both judgments, incidentally, repeat how Eli and his sons have belittled YHWH in the cult, that is, "despised him as nothing" (2:29) or "belittled" (קָלַל) him (3:13). Also ironic is that when

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<sup>503</sup> The frequent construction הָיָה דְבַר-יְהוָה is nearly always rendered "the word of the Lord came," (cf. Gen 15:1; 1 Sam 15:10; 2 Sam 7:4; 24:11; Jer 32:6, 26; 33:1). The adjective יָקָר is probably construed as an adverb.

<sup>504</sup> Literally the passage reads, "There was no vision that was issued," though it should be understood collectively. We have rendered the verb, "issued," though the exact sense of נִפְרָץ is difficult to determine. In 2 Chronicles 31:5 the verb is used with הִתְקַדֵּר. Since the root idea is "to break through" (BDB), the concept seems to be that the people generously responded when the word was issued, communicating that they were immediately obedient. In our view, the second half of the sentence in 1 Samuel 3:1 functions appositively. In any event, the sense of the whole sentence is obviously negative in tone.

<sup>505</sup> R. W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 32. Also see G. R. Driver, "Studies In The Vocabulary of the Old Testament. III," *JTS* 32 (1931): 365–66.

<sup>506</sup> R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 88.

the boy Samuel relays YHWH's judgment to Eli, the priest accepts his punishment with the words: "Let YHWH do what is good in his eyes" (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הוּא הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה). Again, though many of these references involving "seeing" are stock idioms, they appear at important literary junctures and serve to highlight the narrator's themes, namely that those who have a loyal heart can see (Samuel and YHWH), while those who do not have a loyal heart cannot clearly see (Eli). In contrast, YHWH "appears" (לְהֵרָאֶה) to the faithful prophet Samuel at Shiloh in verses 19–20.

In quick narrative succession, the text announces that Samuel's reputation as a trustworthy prophet (נֶאֱמָן שְׁמוּאֵל לְנִבִּיא לַיהוָה) has spread from Dan to Beersheba (3:20–21), a contrast from the sons of Eli whose reputation was infamous. And Eli's honor of being the mediator of revelation has been quickly transferred to the boy Samuel.

In the last act of Eli's life, we find "sight" once again taking the foreground. After two judgment oracles against his house, one in which YHWH promises to choose someone who would do what is in YHWH's heart (בְּלִבְכִּי וּבְנִפְשִׁי יַעֲשֶׂה), Eli is again "sitting on the seat" (יָשָׁב עַל־הַכִּסֵּא). But instead of waiting at the temple door (2:9), he is waiting "by the side of the road" at the city gate (4:13, 18)<sup>507</sup> because his sons had taken the Ark into battle. Eli, who observed Hannah and misjudged her as a בַּת־בְּלִיעַל, who depended on reports about his own wicked sons (בְּנֵי בְלִיעַל) and who "looked (greedily)" on YHWH sacrifices and offerings" (רָבַעַטּוּ בְּזִבְחֵי וּבְמִנְחָתִי)<sup>508</sup> is now blind, ritually unable to approach God himself (Lev 21:18).<sup>509</sup> Indeed, the man whom YHWH accused of fattening himself

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<sup>507</sup> A seat by the city gate is a position of honor (Prov 31:23).

<sup>508</sup> Even the punishment on the house of Eli involves "seeing" as an expression of desire. In 1 Samuel 2:32a, the man of God tells Eli, "You will look greedily on all of the prosperity which will be bestowed upon Israel (וְהִבְטַתָּ צֶרֶם מְעוֹן בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־יֵשִׁיב אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל)."

<sup>509</sup> We, of course, are assuming that the Deuteronomist shared this concept with the Priestly thinkers of Israel. There is some indication that Deuteronomistic thinkers shared some of these concepts regarding these types of cultic matters (e.g., Lev 22:22; Mal 1:8).

(2:29) on his choice sacrifices is now fat (כֶּבֶד). Upon hearing of the Ark's capture—signaling that the “glory of Israel had departed”—Eli falls backwards from his seat, symbolizing (among many things) the fall of his house from a position of honor (Isa 47:1). The combination of weight and age break his neck. Since his sons had perished in battle, the final act in diminishing Eli's house would wait until Solomon deposes Abiathar.

Before concluding, we should emphasize that in the more immediate sense, Samuel has inherited the honor once reserved for Eli and his sons. As we have seen, the young boy Samuel receives revelation from YHWH, and in quick order, his trustworthiness is spread throughout all of Israel. What is more, the redactor has deftly structured the text to contrast Samuel with Hophni and Phinehas. In 1 Samuel 2:11, the boy Samuel is left to minister in the presence of YHWH. In the next verse, the narrator describes in grave detail the ways in which Eli's sons have dishonored YHWH in the cult (2:12–17). Following this account, we have the episode of Elkanah and Hannah's sacrifice (vv. 18–21), which ends once again with the words “Samuel grew up in the presence of YHWH” (v. 21). Eli learns of his sons' wickedness but his rebuke goes unheeded, since YHWH desired to kill them (vv. 22–25). In comparison, “The boy Samuel was growing in stature and good reputation (הָלַךְ וְנִגְדַּל וְנִשְׁבַּח) with YHWH and people” (v. 26). It is following this statement that the man of God pronounces judgment that YHWH will make Eli's house inconsequential (vv. 27–36). As the honor of Samuel reaches great heights with humans and God, the honor of Eli's house is about to be “lightened.” As YHWH raises one man up he lowers the others.

In this short analysis, we have seen the difference between how YHWH sees and how Eli “sees.” The development of these themes is neither mathematical nor symmetrical at every point with every character. Sometimes the themes of “heart” (that

only YHWH can see) and that which humans look upon appear in stock phrases throughout the narrative (e.g., Hannah praying in her heart). Nonetheless, we can see that the narrator builds three basic contrasts: how YHWH (and Elkanah) sees versus how Eli sees; the faithful character of Hannah versus the unfaithful character of Eli; and resultant honoring of Samuel, the Son of Hannah and Elkanah, versus the dishonoring of Eli's sons. We will return to the theme of "what YHWH looks upon versus what humans look upon" when we turn the honoring of David. But to show how those themes work together with honor, we must demonstrate how Hannah's Song works as an adumbration of the honor that is to be exchanged between Eli and Zadok's houses and later between Saul and David's houses, climaxing in the promise of the temple and an eternal dynasty.

#### 4.1.2 The Lofty and the lowly: Hannah's song as an adumbration of the exchange in rank between the northern and southern priestly and royal houses

Most scholars today recognize the secondary nature of 1 Samuel 2:1–10 based on two facts.<sup>510</sup> First, the poem is located in different positions in the 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, LXX and the MT;<sup>511</sup> and secondly, the content and tone of the poem appear to betray a different function setting from its present context. In particular, the reference to YHWH's anointed in verse 10<sup>512</sup> and the mention of war in verse 3 imply that the poem had a more national, royal function.<sup>513</sup> What is more, Hannah's praise and seemingly pro-

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<sup>510</sup> Though it is not our concern to date the original poem, some scholars like McCarter or Freedman date it to the tenth or ninth centuries based on its resonance with early Israelite poetry. P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 75–76. D. N. Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," in *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 243–61.

<sup>511</sup> For example, see S. R. Driver, 23.

<sup>512</sup> We would side with those scholars who see the poem as a unitary composition. The verbal resonances between vv. 1–3 and 9–10 seem to suggest this conclusion.

<sup>513</sup> For example, see W. Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 16–17. We should note that the mention of war could be more poetic than anything

kingship stance is at odds with Samuel's anti-monarchic stance in 1 Samuel 8.<sup>514</sup> The only literally applicable aspect of the poem to Hannah's life is found in the statement: "The barren has born seven [children], but she who has many children is bereft" (v. 5c; cf. v. 21),<sup>515</sup> which for most scholars is a reason for the poem's insertion into this narrative. What concerns us, however, are the functions of 1 Samuel 2:1–10 in its current context.

The first and most obvious purpose for this section is as Hannah's thanksgiving song<sup>516</sup> to YHWH for removing the disgrace of her barrenness. In fact, the centerpiece of the poem is about the *exchange of honor* between those in high positions and those in low positions (vv. 3–8). The second role of the Song is related to the very obvious anachronisms presented by the poem, especially the mention of the king in verse 10. To the modern scholar these anachronisms are evidence of the secondary nature of the poem, but to the ancients they operated as a type of foretelling of what was to come for all of the major characters of the book via the character of God. For example, Hannah unwittingly exalts YHWH as the God who honors the barren with seven children (v. 5c),

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else. Even granting that the poem was originally used in a royal context, the mention of barren women giving birth in verse 5c is completely out-of-place with any literal royal battle context, as much as the mention of a king is in Hannah's context. The "scenes" depicted in the poem are taken from stock poetic phrases that accord with the types of blessings we find in the Deuteronomic blessings. As we have seen, receiving such blessings is depicted as being honored by the deity, and those losing such blessings are being diminished.

<sup>514</sup> J. T. Willis, "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," *CBQ* 35 (1973): 139–54.

<sup>515</sup> If McCarter and others are right that the material that appears in the LXX but not the MT had dropped out of the original text, then verse 9 of the LXX literally applies to Hannah as well: "The one who gives the thing vowed to the one who vows," (διδούς εὐχὴν τῷ εὐχομένῳ).

<sup>516</sup> Scholars see hymnic and thanksgiving elements in Hannah's song. As a praise, the song obviously relates to YHWH's character (e.g., 2:2, 3b), but also it rehearses like many of YHWH's deeds (e.g., verse 4–8). While the formal distinction is a good heuristic, one wonders whether the distinction between who YHWH is and what he does is enough to separate two types of psalms so sharply.



the poetic symbol of a large family.<sup>517</sup> Hannah will bear a total of five more children to replace Samuel when she is bereft of him.<sup>518</sup> While the narrative telescopes the birth of Hannah's other five children in verse 21, the "events" depicted in verse 5 are several years away from happening (v. 21). In essence, the narrator turns Hannah's Song into an unwitting forestalling of YHWH's overall plans with the major characters and their houses.

The song, placed just before the judgment scene on Eli's house, is meant, as we will argue below, to forestall the dishonoring of the northern priestly house. As Philip Esler points out, "This is the best answer to the function of Hannah's Psalm. That it is targeting the sons of Eli, as representatives of Israel's oppressive elite, is confirmed by the way the narrative develops immediately after this passage."<sup>519</sup> While our interpretation does not necessarily carry with it the same emphasis on the abuse of power (the main sin of Eli's house is dishonoring YHWH in the cult) or the limits to Eli's house alone, we agree with his conclusion that the song applies to Eli's house.

What was true of Hannah (and Samuel, by extension) and Eli, is also true of David. The exaltation of YHWH's king in verse 10 would refer, albeit obliquely, to the

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<sup>517</sup> Three things might be noted. The theme of giving a barren wife children is a symbol of augmenting a person's honor (Psa 113:9), though there is no idealized number given, just that YHWH causes the barren woman to dwell in a house as a joyous mother of children (מְוֹשִׁיבִי עֵקֶרֶת הַבֵּית אֶם-הַבָּנִים), because Hannah praises YHWH for the one who gives the barren "seven sons/children," one need not conclude that the narrator represented Hannah as knowing that she was predicting her own future happiness. Such a statement is the same as any idealization in praise. Thus, honoring a mother with "seven children" in the Bible symbolizes an ideal blessing of the fulfilled mother (Ruth 4:15; Job 1:2; 42:13; Tob 14:3; 2 Macc 7:20 [a "seven-fold" martyr text]). See W. L. Holladay, and P. D. Hanson. *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1–25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 443. The anachronistic mention of an Israelite kingship, though, is another matter and frustrates efforts to see the statement as merely some ideal. Because both Hannah's full house and the kingship literally come to pass in the coming chapters of Samuel, the statements appear to be a foreshadowing.

<sup>518</sup> In short, Hannah, as a childless mother, is still at great risk in the family should Elkanah die. Elkanah's entire state will go to Peninnah's sons who could expel her from the family. P. F. Esler, "Role of Hannah," 21.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid, 34.

exaltation of David's house (2 Sam 5:12; 2 Sam 23:1; cf. 1 Chron 14:2).<sup>520</sup> What partially confirms our suggestion is that Saul and his house are never *called* "exalted." Moreover, the foreshadowing of David is present in many of the themes of Hannah's Song. Robert Polzin has shown that Hannah's song has many contacts with the themes of David's song in 2 Samuel 22 (cf. Psa 18) and that the former is a "proleptic summary of David's final hymn,"<sup>521</sup> He concludes the same about David's lament of Saul (2 Sam 1). A. Graeme Auld also notes that "...quite as significant are the many links with key themes of the main prose narrative: Saul and Goliath are both 'tall'; and Samuel is warned against such an external characteristic when choosing Saul's successor."<sup>522</sup> The connections between this Song and the coming narrative about David are many, as we will see. Thus, the poem is not chosen for its relevance to Hannah as much as it is for its relevance to David's rise.

So, once the poem becomes Hannah's Song in the present context, it functions as an adumbration of the blessings of a large family that will come to Hannah. But placed just before the Eli-judgment narrative, it also applies to the diminishment of the northern priestly house and honoring of Zadok.<sup>523</sup> Lastly, as we have aimed to demonstrate in part here, it foretells the honoring (exaltation) of David, though in

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<sup>520</sup> That verse 10 is an oblique reference to the Davidides is strengthened by another indirect reference to Solomon in 1 Samuel 2:35, which refers to the Solomon's exiling Abiathar (1 Kgs 2:27), another reference that is equally oblique.

<sup>521</sup> See R. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: 1 Samuel* (A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History 2; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 33–34.

<sup>522</sup> A. G. Auld, *First and Second Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 38.

<sup>523</sup> We could easily have spoken about the *election* of Samuel, Zadok and David, as the Book of Samuel undoubtedly focuses on it. We are attempting, though, to emphasize the effect rather than the cause here, especially as the Song of Hannah concentrates on the gift of honor or loss of it that comes with gaining or losing position, respectively. But the two concepts in Samuel are inextricably bound.

embryonic form at this point.<sup>524</sup> Thus, the song of Hannah can be said to apply to Hannah, Eli/Zadok, and to Saul/David, which comports with the parallels we have been noting in this chapter. Before exploring the content of the poem, we will briefly outline its structure in relationship to the gain and loss of honor.

#### 4.1.2.1 The structure of Hannah's song

Hannah's Song can be broken into three sections, which we label A (vv. 1–3), B (vv. 4–8) and C (vv. 9–10).<sup>525</sup> The first and third sections generally focus on YHWH's nature, though A also provides the occasion for the poet to boast over her enemies and C mentions YHWH's salvific work of judgment on behalf of his faithful and the exaltation of the king.<sup>526</sup>

That Hannah's song primarily concerns honor and "shame" is underlined by three facts: (1) Sections A and C center on the glory of YHWH. Verses 1 and 2 are an exaltation to YHWH who is unparalleled (vv. 1–2), while verse 10 celebrates how

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<sup>524</sup> At least some later Jewish groups saw the Song of Hannah in a prophetic light. For example, the *Targum of Prophets* (135 CE) contains an identical version of the Hannah narrative, but the song of Hannah is greatly expanded. While we cannot treat this Targum in any depth, we will note that the apocalyptic community that produced this work saw Hannah's prayer as a prophecy, though it had multiple points of fulfillment of Israel's victory over various foes throughout her history (over the Philistines, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, and Romans), culminating in Israel's apocalyptic victory. In the Targum, the Song opens in verse 1 with: "Hannah prayed in a spirit of prophecy and said (וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהֵי חַנָּה בְּרוּחַ אֱתֵנְבִיאַת)." Each of the "fulfillments" is subsequently marked with the verb נִבְּאָה (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5). There is also a strongly apocalyptic element, likely owing to the community that received the Targum. See the analysis of J. E. Cook, *Hannah's Desire, God's Design: Early Interpretations of the Story of Hannah* (JSOTSup 282; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 77–90. According to Daniel Harrington, the song could have been in independent composition and could date between 70 CE and the fall of the Roman Empire. D. J. Harrington, "The Apocalypse of Hannah: Targum Jonathan of 1 Samuel 2:1–10," in *'Working with No Data': Semitic and Egyptian Studies Presented to Thomas O. Lambdin* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 147–52.

<sup>525</sup> Much more material is contained in section C, especially if we add the text from the LXX that is roughly equivalent to Jeremiah 9:22–34 and that probably dropped out of MT and 4QSama. See P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 70. We do not, however, need to treat the textual criticism of verses 1–3 and 9–10 with any depth, since the main thrust of our argument concerns verses 4–8, and none of our arguments depend any particular doubted reading of sections A and C. For example, section A is clearly an exaltation of YHWH and verse 10 mentions, YHWH's king under any reckoning.

<sup>526</sup> Along with Driver, Klein, McCarter, Lewis, and most translations, we read the singular with the MT and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (לְמֶלֶךְ) against the LXX (τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἡμῶν).

YHWH judges the ends of the earth. (2) Section B significantly focuses on how YHWH exerts his dominion over the world social order to give ascendancy to the lowly. This is set out in terms of military supremacy (v. 4), economic privilege (v. 5ab; 7ab), and familial status (v. 5cd). The familiar themes of honor–shame as life–death also appear (v. 6) alongside the notion of sitting with rulers. All but the last of these were reflected in Deuteronomy 28 and all were reflected in our discussion on the vocabulary of honor. (3) After Section B depicts YHWH raising the lowly to sit with princes (v. 8), Section C speaks of YHWH exalting his king (v. 10). From the first to the last, the poem is about how honor is gained and lost under the dominion of YHWH.

As our chart entitled “YHWH’s Dominion of Honor in the Social Order,” demonstrates, verses 4–7 consist of 7 pairs of honor-gained-and-honor-lost statements that crescendo in a four-fold statement describing how YHWH’s raises the lowly from the dust to sit with kings (v. 8ac). Though not exclusively, the dominant semantics of honor is the ascending and descending in social position (e.g. vv. 6–8, especially note *מְרוֹמָם* and *מִשְׁפִּיל* in verse 7). Moreover, the gnomic statements of YHWH’s actions<sup>527</sup> on the part of the lowly express a conservative notion of honor.<sup>528</sup> That is, the reversal for the lofty from high to low position of rank (see ↓ in the chart below) is accompanied by an equal and opposite reversal for the lowly who go from a low to high position of rank (↑). In this sense, we can say that YHWH *exchanges* the honor of the lofty for that of the lowly.

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<sup>527</sup> The passive voice is used throughout the section, though the text implies that it is YHWH reversing the fortunes of the lofty and lowly.

<sup>528</sup> Our terminology “conservative” to describe honor follows the scientific usage as might be applied to energy. Where energy is lost, it must be gained elsewhere. Likewise, Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, commenting on the gospels, explain this aspect of honor as follows: “Since honor is a limited good, if one person wins honor, someone else loses. Envy is thus institutionalized and subjects anyone seeking to outdo his neighbors to hostile gossip and the pressure to share.” B. Malina and R. L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 76.

Section B can be broken down into three major subsections. The first major subsection can be further divided into three honor-shame statements. The first two statements take the pattern ↓ and ↑, and the subsection ends with a third statement that reverses the pattern to ↑ and ↓. The second subsection “intensifies” the first subsection. The first two divisions are composed of *two pairs* of ↓ and ↑ statements. Then, instead of being followed by a single statement with an ↑ and ↓ pattern, the second subsection finishes emphatically with four ↑ statements that result in enthronement. The last of the three major subsections furnishes a conclusion for all of section B: a statement of confidence that YHWH’s dominion over the world social order stems from his having established the world order itself (v. 8c). If by the poem’s inclusion into the Hannah narrative, verse 10 becomes an oblique reference to David, then verse 8 is an oblique reference to his rise, even if it is poetically expressed (See table 4.1 below).

**Table 4.1: YHWH's Dominion of Honor in the Social Order**

Verse	Honor	YHWH's Exchanges in Honor
v. 4a	↓	The bow <sup>529</sup> of the mighty is shattered; <sup>530</sup>
4b	↑	But the feeble <sup>531</sup> gird on strength.
v. 5a	↓	The full have hired themselves out for bread; <sup>532</sup>
5b	↑	But the hungry no longer (hire themselves) out. <sup>533</sup>

<sup>529</sup> Against McCarter who follows Dahood, the feminine singular קִשֶּׁת need not be pluralized against the MT and LXX and despite ungrammatical construction with the masculine plural הַחֲמִים. The singular could appear for a number of reasons: קִשֶּׁת is a metonym for the singular הַיָּד; and קִשֶּׁת could be understood collectively. Though there is a lacuna in 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, the singular reading חֲמֵה lends some weight to our decision to retain the singular feminine. We have retained the masculine plural הַחֲמִים as original, despite the grammatical problems, which could be explained as conscious poetic choices due to a number of factors: parallels in the next stich and attraction to גְּבִרִים (Driver). With Driver and against Lewis, we see this attraction as original to the poet instead of a later scribe. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> tries to alleviate this problem with the feminine singular חֲמֵה. T. Lewis, "The Textual History of the Song of Hannah: 1 Samuel II 1–10," VT 44, no. 1 (1994): 32.

<sup>530</sup> As Driver states, "...what the poet desires to express is not so much that the bows, as that the warriors themselves, are broken" (cf. Isa 21:17; Zech 8:10). S. R. Driver, 25.

<sup>531</sup> The niphāl נִפְשָׁלִים can mean "to stumble" (Isa 63:13; Jer 8:12), in the context of "strength" (הַיָּד), it appears best to understand it as a reference to "weakness" (cf. LXX ἀσθενούντες; // יָגַע, Isa 40:30; BDB; Lewis; McCarter).

<sup>532</sup> We understand the niphāl as reflexive, and בָּ on לָחֶם as the בָּ of exchange (cf. Lewis). R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 45. We agree with Lewis who notes that B (πλήρεις ἄρτων), Syr-Hex (sbyʿy lhm), OL (pleni panibus) misinterpret בָּלָחֶם, which may have led the corruption of נִפְשָׁרִי (LXX ἡλαττώθησαν). Lewis suggests an underlying root of *škk* ("to decrease, abate") with a *w* and *r* being graphically confused in some periods. T. Lewis, 33. While a solid suggestion, the problem is that the LXX never renders *škk* with ἐλαττώ. Another possibility was that the verb in the Vorlage of the LXX was garbled or missing, and translators chose to render it with a synonym of נִפְשָׁרִי, which is used to depict woman who is now bereft of children. Note how ἐλαττώ is used in contexts of diminishing number (e.g., Num 26:54; 33:54; 1 Sam 21:16; Jer 30:19).

<sup>533</sup> The difficult expression עָד הָרִלּוּ ("they have ceased until;" MT; 4QSam<sup>a</sup>; Syr and Vulg.) finds no easy explanation. The versions deal variously with it. According to Cheney the LXX παρήκων γῆν perhaps reflects a dittography (h<sub>d</sub>lw h<sub>d</sub>l). Chaney, Marvin L., *HDL-II and the Song of Deborah: Textual, Philological, and Sociological Studies in Judges 5, with Special Reference to the Verbal Occurrences of HDL in Biblical Hebrew, a Thesis* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1976); T. Lewis, 34. In any event, P. Calderone and D. W. Thomas were the first to suggest (independently) the existence of הָרִלּוּ ("to grow plump"), which has influenced the readings of many scholars (e.g., Auld; Klein; McCarter) and modern translations (e.g., NRSV, NLT). D. W. Thomas, "Some Observations on the Hebrew Root h<sub>d</sub>l," in *Volume du Congrès, Strassbourg (VTSup 4; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1956)*, 8–16. P. J. Calderone "HDL-II in Poetic Texts," CBQ 23 (1961): 451–60. Lewis has rendered the stich: "But the hungry do not (hire themselves out) any more (cf. NIV). T. Lewis, 24. He has argued that the evidence for HDL-II is sparse at best. T. Lewis, "The Songs of Hannah and Deborah HDL-II ('Growing Plump')," JBL 104 (1985): 105–8. Following Klein he reprints 'ad as 'od. R. Klein, 17. Based on Jer 40:4; Ezek 2:5, 7; 3:11, 27, Lewis demonstrates that h<sub>d</sub>l can mean "to cease to do something." T. Lewis, *Textual History*, 34. In our view, no solution is without difficulties, though Lewis' explanation appears best at this time.

**Table 4.1: YHWH's Dominion of Honor in the Social Order (continued)**

Verse	Honor	YHWH's Exchanges in Honor
5c	↑	The barren has borne seven;
5d	↓	But she who has many children is bereaved. <sup>534</sup>
v. 6ab	↓↑	YHWH kills and brings to life; <sup>535</sup>
6cd	↓↑	But he brings down to Sheol and raises up. <sup>536</sup>
v. 7ab	↓↑	YHWH makes poor and makes rich.
7cd	↓↑	He debases, he also exalts.
v. 8a	↑	He raises up the poor from the dust; <sup>537</sup>
8b	↑	He lifts the needy from the ash heap,
8c	↑	To make them sit with princes
8d	↑	And inherit a throne of honor.
8e		<sup>538</sup> For the pillars <sup>539</sup> of the earth are YHWH's
8f		And on them he has set the world.

<sup>534</sup> In other passages, the root *אמל* denotes barrenness. In particular, it is used in contexts of once fertile places (e.g., fields, sea, etc.) that are now bereft of fruitfulness (Isa 16:8; 19:8; 19:8; 24:4; 33:9; Jer 14:2; Joel 1:10, 12; etc.). What is of note, however, is the association with deep shame. Jeremiah 15:9 states, "She who has born seven is bereft...she is shamed and disgraced (*בְּיִשָּׁה וְחִפְּזָה*)."

<sup>535</sup> Quite possibly this stich should be rendered "YHWH kills and preserves life." While McCarter prefers our rendering "quicken," and likewise Lewis "makes alive." The concept behind this phrase, however, deals with the preservation of a life that was nearly ended. See R. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 17 (cf. Deut 32:39; Wis 16:13; Ps 30:4; 68:21).

<sup>536</sup> The verb *עלה* would have the same force as the piel *חיה*, thus, it can be rendered "rescues from it." See R. Klein, 15. We have tended to favor our translation, as it maintains the up/down dichotomy that expresses the notion of status in the passage.

<sup>537</sup> When applied to the kingship, as this passage in its greater scope will be, it refers to the replacement of one dynasty with another (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:27 [kingship]). YHWH tells Baasha in 1 Kings 16:2, "...I raised you from the dust, and I appointed you prince over my people Israel..." (*עַל עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל*). Though not using these words, YHWH will raise David (*הָרִימְתִּיךָ מִן־הָעֶפֶר וְאֶתָּנָךְ נָגִיד*).

<sup>538</sup> The LXX is lacks verse 8e. The discrepancy between the two accounts spans into the next section, as the LXX lacks 9a as well and replaces it with *διδοὺς εὐχὴν τῷ εὐχομένῳ καὶ εὐλόγησεν ἔτη δικαίου· ὅτι οὐκ ἐν ἰσχύι δυνάτοδς ἀνήρ*. The reference to vowing, no doubt is a reference to Hannah who made a vow before YHWH.

<sup>539</sup> The plural noun *מְצֻקִים* has occasioned much speculation. The only other place it appears is in 1 Samuel 14:5 (Vulg. *scopulus*), though it either did not appear in the *Vorlage* of the LXX or was too opaque to translate it. McCarter understands the whole construct as "straights of the earth [i.e., underworld]," where judgment takes place. See P. K. McCarter "The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature," *HTR* 66 (1973): 403–12.

After having reviewed the structure of section B of Hannah's Song and before showing the text's connection to the judgment on the House of Eli, we will comment on salient features of the text that relate to the honor-shame dichotomy present in the text.

That the overriding purpose of this section is about raising honor is easily demonstrated by the dénouement where YHWH raises up the needy to sit with princes on "seats of honor" (8c–d). The final statement seems to summarize the very purpose of section B. Not only does the position of this statement support our conclusion, but also the fact that is an "intrusive" element. That is, the poet who constructed Hannah's Song generally borrowed verbatim from the stock phrases found in Psalm 113:7–8 to construct this part of Hannah's Song, except for verse 8d (though see the differing forms for קָרוֹם). Instead of "with the princes of his people" (עַם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ) in Psalm 113:8b, the poet chose "and will inherit a throne of honor" (וְיָרֵשׁ כִּבְדֹּר יְהוֹלָם).<sup>540</sup> The inclusion of 1 Samuel 8d, shows how the author was emphasizing the theme of a person of lower status being raised by YHWH to the seat of kingship.<sup>541</sup> And as Section B ends with the exaltation of the lowly to the throne of honor, Section C (LXX or MT) ends with exalted of YHWH's anointed (v. 10), thus making the overall theme the exaltation of the Israelite kingship itself on the international stage. Brueggemann states, "The personal joy of Hannah is tilted toward the coming greatness of Israel under David."<sup>542</sup> Lastly, as we have already established, the entire section is built around the up-and-down exchanges between

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<sup>540</sup> The idea of "inheriting a kingdom, throne, etc." appears only here and in some Second Temple literature (1 Macc 2:57; Matt 25:34; 1 Cor 6:9–10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5). While in Maccabees, it is applied to the Davidic throne, in the New Testament the concepts has been "eschatologized."

<sup>541</sup> The point we are making is a canonical-analytical one, and the various *audiences* that received 1 Samuel need not have been aware of Psalm 113. It appear to us, at first glance, that the song depends on Psalm 113 and was changed by some later Deuteronomistic editor to give thematic shape to the whole work and to adumbrate the central theme in the book of Samuel.

<sup>542</sup> W. Brueggemann, 17.



people in low political, familial, economic and military positions and those in the respective high positions.

Until now we have labored to show that Hannah's song operated in its current context as a foreshadowing of Hannah and David's future honoring (the climax of the entire song). What is more, in its current location, the Song precedes the account of both the sins of Eli's house and the judgment on it. Along with Philip Elser, it prefigures the fate of Eli's house. It will be our task in the next section to demonstrate how Hannah's Song is used as a frame for the fall of the northern priestly house.

#### 4.1.2.2 The song of Hannah and the judgment on the northern priestly house of Eli

After Hannah's Song, the narrator begins to build his case against Eli's house in earnest, contrasting the rising honor of Hannah's "house"<sup>543</sup> with the diminishing honor of Eli's House.<sup>544</sup> The story of Eli's songs is framed by an account of Samuel. In verses 11, Samuel is described as a young man (נָעַר),<sup>545</sup> ministering before YHWH, followed by the ministry of the Eli's sons. They are described as "young men" (נְעָרִים, v. 17) and "worthless men" (בְּנֵי בָלְעָשָׁל) who have no regard for YHWH (אֶת־יְהוָה) or the duties of the priests concerning the people (2:12–13). By stealing the choice parts of the sacrifices that belonged to YHWH alone (2:16; cf. 29), Hophni and Phineas treated the people's sacrifices to YHWH with disdain (נָאֵץ, 2:17).<sup>546</sup> In contrast, just two sentences later, the

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<sup>543</sup> We are using "Hannah's house" rather loosely here to highlight a literary contrast, not to denote a conceptual social entity.

<sup>544</sup> Brueggemann puts it this way: "'The rise of Samuel' is narrated in counterpoint to the account of 'Eli's fall.'" W. Brueggemann, 22. Brueggemann places the stress of the passage on Samuel's growth into manhood rather than on his honor, as we do. The passage centers around the wickedness/dishonorable actions that lead to the downfall of Eli's house.

<sup>545</sup> There may also be a comparison between the נָעַר Samuel and נָעַר David, both of whom would surpass their masters.

<sup>546</sup> The sin is called "very great" (גְּדוֹלָה מְאֹד, v. 17). Among the many functions sacrifices had, one was honoring the deity with the type and quality of the sacrifice. Giving YHWH anything less than his

narrator tells us how Hannah and her husband faithfully come to offer up a yearly sacrifice to YHWH (2:19); and it is at that time that Eli blesses the couple for the most valuable gift they gave (v. 20). The account of Eli's son gives way to the last part of the frame where the boy Samuel is ministering before YHWH, and honored with an ephod."<sup>547</sup>

We have a second frame. Eli blesses Elkanah and Hannah, and their family grows (v. 21), in comparison to Eli's sons who will now die (v. 25). Just as the people of YHWH are spreading Hophni and Phineas' ill fame (v. 24), Samuel's fame with YHWH and the people keep growing (v. 26).<sup>548</sup> The scene is now set for the man of God to announce the judgment on Eli's House.

Two things are worth stressing in the account. To understand the judgment against Eli's house, we must re-emphasize that the sins "against the cult," at least as conceived in this text, are cast not as a violation of the holy sphere by the profane, but a violation of the deity's honor in his house, where YHWH is shown no regard. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Eli is accused of dishonoring YHWH by using the very status his house had been graciously given (2:27–28), namely by *looking* upon YHWH's sacrifices with a "selfish eye" and stealing what belonged to the deity (v. 29). Moreover, by not restraining his sons from taking the sacrifices with which the people honor YHWH, Eli is guilty of honoring his sons over YHWH (v. 29) and violating the first rule of loyalty—to bless those who bless you and to curse those who curse you.

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due was considered dishonoring (Mal 1:1–9), and it deserved the death penalty (Lev 3:16; 7:22–25). Despite their sins being well known, Eli fails to remove his sons after his rebuke (1 Sam 2:12–25). Thus, YHWH issues two judgments against the house of Eli, the first directly involving status exchange (1 Sam 2:27ff.; 3:10ff.).

<sup>547</sup> The wearing of the ephod points forward to the honor received by Eli's house (2:28).

<sup>548</sup> The passage is difficult to translate. We take *וְגִדְלָהּ וְשָׂמָה* to be a hendiadys to literally mean "greater in good with God and men."

Therefore, such actions deserved judgment (v. 30), and it is in the *talionic* formulation of this punishment that we confirm our view that both crime and punishment were honor-based: “Therefore, declares YHWH the God of Israel, I solemnly declared ‘Your house and the house of your ancestors would go in and out before me forever,’ but now, declares YHWH, far be it from me: ‘For the one who honors me, I will honor (מְכַבֵּדִי אֶכְבֵּד); but the one that has despised me as nothing (בִּזְוָה), I will make unimportant (קָלִיל)...” Since YHWH was despised as nothing, he will *diminish* the household of Eli. The concept of diminishment (shame) is represented in three ways: (1) the position of Eli’s household (before YHWH); (2) the progeny of Eli’s household and (3) the prosperity of Eli’s household, especially in relationship to Israel and the new priestly house YHWH will choose. All of these judgments comport with the Deuteronomic curses in chapter 28, which were seen as lowering Israel’s status and esteem (shaming).

First, with regard to position, our former discussion of “eyes” and “heart” comes into play. The action of the eyes reveals the desires of the hearts of the house of Eli, namely their disloyalty by taking what belonged to God (v. 29).<sup>549</sup> Therefore, if the deity’s problem was a priesthood that looks greedily upon the choice parts of his sacrifices, the *talionic* solution is to find a faithful priest (נֹאמָר) who will do what is in YHWH’s heart (בְּלִבִּי). In their poverty, the remnants of Eli’s household would have to “come to bow down to [the new priest] for” various forms of economic support (v. 36). The remnant of Eli’s house would also have to beg the new, faithful priest’s household

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<sup>549</sup> Loyalty, according to Proverbs is written on the heart (3:3), and the theme of faithfulness and heart is a favorite of the Deuteronomist (e.g., 1 Sam 2:35; 12:24; 1 Kgs 2:4; 3:6; 2 Kgs 20:3).

to serve again (v. 36).<sup>550</sup> Such a prophecy would not happen immediately, but occur in stages. After Eli's line is decimated by Saul, they would share power with Zadok under David and eventually lose position altogether when Solomon deposes Abiathar.

One more thing should be emphasized about position. As Eli lost an eternal position, YHWH would give his new, faithful priest an eternal position (כֹּהֵן עֲלָמִים). There is only one critical distinction to be made between what Eli's house had lost and what the new loyal priest's house would gain: The priesthood would function in connection to YHWH's anointed (וְהִתְחַלֵּץ לְפָנֵי מְשִׁיחָיו), which is echoed in 2 Samuel 2:10.

Also to be fulfilled in stages is the diminishment of Eli's progeny. The deaths of Hophni and Phineas would serve as a sign for the rest of the judgments against Eli's house coming true (v. 34). This prophecy appears to be fulfilled in the slaughter of the priests of Nob that leaves Abiathar the lone survivor of Eli's household (1 Sam 22). While the deaths of Eli himself and Phineas' wife are not part of the prophecy, YHWH appears to be starting to sweep the whole house away in the opening chapters of the Book of Samuel.

Lastly, as we have seen, the loss of economic viability is connected with the loss of position. The remnants of the northern priest's house would have to humble themselves to YHWH's new faithful priestly house for silver or a piece of bread (v. 36). Before moving on to our comparison between the honor-exchange elements in Hannah's Song and those present here, we will remark very briefly on the second judgment scene.

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<sup>550</sup> The MT reading וְהִתְחַלֵּץ לְפָנֵי מְשִׁיחָיו would also appear to be a *talionic* punishment based on verse 29, but neither the LXX nor 4QSam<sup>a</sup> contain this passage. As such it appears that these two sources appear to have suffered a haplography that included the last words וְהִתְחַלֵּץ לְפָנֵי מְשִׁיחָיו in verse 31 up to, but not including, the words וְלֹא יִהְיֶה in verse 32. Most commentators see verse 32a as a corruption of verse 29. See P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 88; and R. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 23.

The narrative of the first judgment on Eli's house ends abruptly and is juxtaposed with the boy Samuel receiving a second oracle against the house of Eli. While the two judgment oracles in 1 Samuel 2–3 differ in wording, their accusation against Eli's house is essentially the same; they have been belittling God (3:13).<sup>551</sup> In its redacted position and form, the second oracle even presumes the first one (3:12). What is important to point out is that the themes present in Hannah's Song parallel the loss of honor for the house of Eli (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: The Diminishment of the House of Eli**

Hannah: The Reversal of High Status (שפלה)	Eli: The Reversal of High Status (קללה)
Bows of the mighty are shattered (v. 4) YHWH kills (v. 6); He brings down to Sheol (v. 6).	Hophni and Phineas are killed in battle (2:31, 33-34). Eli himself falls and dies.
The full hire themselves out for food (v. 5).	Remaining members of Eli's house will become clients <sup>552</sup> of the new loyal priest whom YHWH will raise up (1 Sam 2:36)
He makes poor (v. 7).	In distress will look with selfish eye on all the prosperity of Israel (v. 32a)
One with many children becomes childless (v. 5).	No one live to old age (2:32b) Hophni, Phineas, Eli, Phineas's wife dies.

Such equivalences between Hannah's Song and the curses to befall Eli are not forced. In fact, these judgments by YHWH are just singular examples of the Deuteronomic covenantal curses that, in this context, provide a social-theological paradigm through

<sup>551</sup> Likely, the MT's מְלַל is a late haplography of מְלַל and explains the LXX's θεόν. Thus, we reject a reflexive translation. While "cursed" or "blasphemed" (cf. LXX κακολογοῦντες; cf. Exod 22:27; Lev 24:15) is a possible translation, the multiple parallels between this judgment passage and the former necessitates that we retain our former understanding of קללה, that is, to "treat as inconsequential."

<sup>552</sup> Brueggemann states, "...verse 36 suggest that the older [Mushite] order may endure, but it will be in a dependent position, receiving its keep and sustenance from the now powerful new order." W. Brueggemann, 24.

which to understand the text. We have seen all of these patterns in the blessings and curses of the Deuteronomic Code, associated with honor and “shame,” conceived, once again, as high and low position. The following chart is not exhaustive, but illustrates how each of the elements in Hannah’s Song are poetic instantiations of the *type* of legal curses found in Deuteronomy 28.

**Table 4.3: Types of Honor Loss in Hannah’s Prayer  
and the Deuteronomic Covenantal Curses**

<b>1 Samuel 2:1–10 High to Low Status (לַעֲשׂוֹת)</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 28 High to Low Status (implicit לַעֲשׂוֹת)</b>
Bows of the mighty are shattered (v. 4)	Defeated by enemies (vv. 19, 25, 52)
YHWH kills (v. 6); He brings down to Sheol (v. 6)	Death (vv. 61, 66)
The full hire themselves out for food (v. 5)	Be economic dependents/slaves (vv. 36, 44, 48)
He makes poor (v. 7)	Makes poor (vv. 18, 51, 63)
One with many children becomes childless (v. 5)	Loss or destruction of children in household (vv. 18, 32, 41, 53, 57, 62)

To reiterate, the judgments on the house of Eli are fundamentally an exchange of honor between his household and that of Zadok’s, though only explicitly spelled out in terms of an exchange of position and prosperity. Thus, in this way, the inclusion of the Song of Hannah appears to have multiple literary valences. On the one hand, in its current context, it functions as Hannah’s thanksgiving song for who YHWH is and what he has done. On the other hand, it points forward to what YHWH will do with regard to the house Eli, Zadok, Saul and David. In short, the thanks Hannah gives YHWH for his character is really an adumbration for the acts he will commit.

All that was left was to fulfill the two judgment oracles in a way that paradigmatically reflected the Hannah's Song and have as their root and goal: the exchange of honor.

#### 4.1.3 Height and heart: The houses Saul and David

What is true of the houses of Eli and Zadok will also be true of the houses of Saul and David. While the narrator supplies no explicit causal connection between the fates of the two northern houses, the implicit connection is that the northern houses share the common trait of having a bad heart, which leads to them dishonoring the deity. As Saul's and Eli's houses fail to honor YHWH, he diminishes them. While the Saul narrative is not marked for such terminology, two things confirm that the narrator wants his readers to see the decline of Saul and the rise of David in these terms. The first is the structural-narratological way in which both houses are presented; the second is the explicit terms in which David is presented.

With regard to the narratological issues, we will reproduce what we have already partially presented in our lexical chapter, though with some expansions. As we may recall, YHWH would diminish (קָלַל) Eli's house for failing to honor the deity—or more accurately for despising him as nothing (כִּזָּז). The diminishment of Eli's house would happen in three regards: position, progeny, and prosperity. We see these same issues come out with regard to Saul's house: (1) Both houses commit similar crimes against the cult by taking what belongs to YHWH (1 Sam 2:12–17 [the fatty portions]; 15:15 [what is under the ban]), which we have identified as dishonoring the deity; (2) both of these sins involve honoring or obeying others instead of YHWH (1 Sam 2:29, 35 [Eli his sons]; 2 Sam 15:24 [Saul the people]); (3) both are twice rejected by YHWH (2:30 and 3:13 [Eli]; 13:1ff.; 15:1ff. [Saul]); (4) both lose the possibility of an eternal house (1

Sam 2:30; 13:13–14a); (5) one who will be after YHWH's heart will take his place (1 Sam 2:35; 14:14b; cf. 1 Sam 15:28);<sup>553</sup> (6) almost all the descendants of both houses are killed by the sword (1 Sam 2:4:17–18 [Eli and his sons]; 22 [priests of Nob]; 1 Sam 31 [Saul and his sons]; 2 Sam 4:7 [Ishbaal]);<sup>554</sup> (7) the one whom YHWH chooses is given an eternal house because of their heart and concomitant actions (1 Sam 2:30; 2 Sam 7); (8) the remaining descendants of both houses are depicted as eating at the table of YHWH's chosen replacement (2 Sam 2:36; 2 Sam 9:7); and (9) when the death of the house (with the associations of departing glory) is announced, a young grandson is negatively affected (1 Sam 4:19–22 [Ichabod]; 2 Sam 4:4 [Meriba'al]). Of course, there are differences in detail between their accounts. Both accounts, however, show a prevailing "heart" malady in the north, its disastrous results, and the eternal benefits that accrue to the South, which possessed a more faithful, honorable character.<sup>555</sup> The narrator accomplishes this in seed form by proleptically laying out these themes in the Song of Hannah.

Secondly, the "heart" motif, as we have seen, is a significant theme in the presentation of the houses that will shame or conversely honor YHWH. In the Saul-David narratives "heart," which only YHWH can see, is contrasted with the theme of "height," what humans look on (as a form of trust [in war]). In fact, because the interests of the priesthood are ideologically, hence, narratively subsumed under those of the kingship for the Deuteronomist (1 Sam 2:10, 2:35), the contrasting themes of

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<sup>553</sup> As we will see, the verbal expressions vary in these passages, but that is perhaps due to the varying sources employed. Nonetheless, they express the same sentiments.

<sup>554</sup> We have retained the names "Ishbaal" and "Meribaal." See McCarter's thorough discussion. P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 82 and 124–25.

<sup>555</sup> We reiterate that it is not that YHWH's election *depends* on the faithful actions of David and Zadok, but that YHWH chooses those who will be faithful.



height and heart come into greater focus. This dichotomy plays out in several arenas: the election of Saul (over YHWH), David's election over Eliab and David over Goliath (and Saul and Eliab). The culmination of these narratives will lead to the eternal prestige David receives from YHWH in 2 Samuel 7.

#### 4.1.2.1 The choice of height: The house of Saul

Long overmatched by the Philistines and having had to watch YHWH go into captivity (1 Sam 4), the Israelites demanded a king who could be their military leader (1 Sam 8), their second such attempt (Jdg 9). What is ironic is that YHWH had just directed Israel to “return to YHWH with all of [their] heart (בְּכָל-לִבְבְּכֶם אֲתֶם שָׁבִים)” and to “make their hearts firm” (וְהָכִינוּ לְבָבְכֶם) for YHWH and serve him only—as a precondition for their freedom from the Philistines (7:3). Despite rejecting his kingship, God answers the Israelites by giving them Saul. He *appears* to be the quintessential choice. In fact, the Benjamite is *incomparably* handsome and tall (9:2). Beauty was often seen as an *outward* mark of divine favor in the ancient world.<sup>556</sup> When Samuel presents Saul, “they stood him up in the midst of the people, and his shoulder was higher than all of the people” (10:23). Based on the sight of Saul, Samuel tells them, “Have you not seen (הֲרָאִיתֶם) the one whom YHWH has chosen? Indeed there is no one like him among the people.” (10:24). Saul *looks* to be just what the people need, the Israelite Goliath. So, “all the people” shouted in acceptance, “Long live the king!” (v. 24). YHWH's choice of Saul, however, is an ironic one at best, as God gives the people שְׂאֵל “What was asked for” or

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<sup>556</sup> The outward mark of divine election in many cases is handsomeness or beauty: Joseph (Gen 39:6), Saul (1 Sam 9:2), David (1 Sam 16:12; 17:42), the king of Israel (Ps 45:2); Daniel and his companions (Dan 1:4), Esther (Esther 2:7), the Maccabean brothers (4 Macc 8:3). In contrast the servant of YHWH is a surprise choice because he had no sense of stature “[He rose up] like a root from the dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should take note of him (וְיִנְיָאֲדָר), no appearance that we should desire him” (Isa 53:2). Thus, he was despised as nothing (בִּזְיָה, v. 3), about whom people thought little (וְלֹא הִשְׁבִּיחוּ).

“the one whom they asked for.”<sup>557</sup> His incomparable handsomeness and height would be quite deceptive objects of trust. Not only is Saul hiding in the baggage,<sup>558</sup> but to the Deuteronomist his ancestral pedigree is suspect. He is from Gibeah, whose ancestors are described as בְּנֵי בִלְעֵל, men who tried to rape a levite from Bethlehem and who successfully raped the levite’s concubine to death.<sup>559</sup>

There are three points that seem to mitigate against the case we are building: (1) In 1 Samuel 10:9, Saul is given “another heart” (לֵב אֲחֵר); (2) in 1 Samuel 10:27, the men who thought little of Saul (בֹּזֵה) are called worthless men (בְּנֵי בִלְעֵל), indicating that the narrator is on the side of Saul; and (3) the accounts of an angry Saul cutting up the parts of the oxen are parallel to the angry levite cutting up his wife, both of which appeared

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<sup>557</sup> This is in contrast to David, whom YHWH who chose “according to his mind” (לִּי אִישׁ כְּלִבּוֹ) (בְּקִשׁ יְהוָה), instead of what the people wanted.

<sup>558</sup> Later Jewish interpreters seemingly understood Saul’s acts as more than just bashfulness or stock humility. In the additions to the so-called tale of David and Goliath found in the MT and LXX<sup>A</sup>, David leaves his things with the one who keeps the baggage and rushes toward the battle lines (17:20-22). Saul, however, hides himself among baggage at his “coronation” (10:22). The contrast could not be starker in a text designed to bring out David’s bravery that is fueled by his commitment to YHWH’s honor.

<sup>559</sup> Though individuals in societies that stress group identity can act more or less honorably than their ancestors, they are judged by their associations with their various social groups. As Malina and Rohrbaugh note, “It is characteristic of the Mediterranean world to think in terms of stereotypes, that is, to think of persons in terms of place of origin, residence, family, gender, age, and any other groups to which they might belong. One’s identity was always the stereotyped identity of the group. This meant that much social information was encoded in the labels such groups acquired.” B. Malina and R. L. Rohrbaugh, 200. In our case, the narrator of Judges presents Saul’s ancestors as morally suspect—at best. We believe this thinking bears out in the Bible. Ezekiel 16:3 states in a judgment against Jerusalem, “Your origin and your birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother was a Hittite” (16:3; cf. 16:45). Hezekiah’s couriers sent a message to Israel in 2 Chronicles 30:7, saying, “Do not be like your ancestors or kin who acted disloyally to YHWH, the God of their fathers...” (cf. Psalms 78:6ff.; Zechariah 1:4). In Judges 19:22, the men of Saul’s hometown are described with an epithet of shame as “men of worthlessness” (אֲנָשֵׁי בְנֵי בִלְעֵל). They demanded that the host in the passage turn out his guest: “...so that we might have intercourse with him (וְנִרְעֵנּוּ).” In verse 23, the host begs for them not to do such an evil (אֶל-תַּרְעֵנוּ) and dishonorable thing (אֶת-הַנֶּבֱלָה הַזֹּאת) // זִמָּה and נְבִלָה in 20:6). He tells the men, “Do to them what is good in your eyes” (וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם). What seemed good to them was raping the concubine to death. Their punishment was death for bringing disgrace upon Israel (עֲשֵׂה בְיָשָׁר אֶל-עַמְּךָ). The act is portrayed as the lowest moral point in Israelite history (19:30). Perhaps one reason that the characters in Judges 19 go nameless is because the passage focuses on the collective character of the Gibeahites (and all Israel). In essence, Saul is descended from the Sodom of Israel (comp. Gen 19). This same stereotyped thinking exists into the Common Era. Nathanael asks, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46), or the author of Titus can claim the adage, “Cretans are always liars, evil animals, lazy gluttons” (Titus 1:12).

to unite Israel under a common righteous cause (11:7). The account makes Saul look brave, righteous and honorable, almost as if he is undoing the worthless actions of his Gibeahite ancestors.

Points (1) and (3) are associated with the reception of God's spirit. In 1 Samuel 10:6, Samuel declares to Saul that "...the spirit of YHWH will rush upon you will be in a prophetic frenzy with them, and you will turn into another man (וְנִהְיֶיכָה לְאִישׁ אֲחֵר). Then, Saul is given "another heart" in 10:9 and prophecies in the next verse. The same can be said for the episode with Nahash the Ammonite. When Saul hears of the siege of Jabesh, "the spirit of God rushed upon him powerfully, [thus] when he heard these words he became exceedingly angry" (11:6). The difficulty these two examples present is that Saul is only changed into a different person after he receives the spirit of God, something which is revoked in 1 Samuel 16:14, where the spirit of God departs from Saul.

David is presented differently. Even as a boy shepherd, David displays great bravery, unlike Saul who hides in the luggage, even after his anointing. Secondly, the spirit of YHWH needs to continue to rush upon Saul, where for David, once he is anointed, "the spirit of YHWH rushes upon David from that day onward" (16:13). It is the same characteristic language, but there is some qualitative difference, according to the Deuteronomist, between the character of the two men and hence the endurance of their anointings.

With regard to reason (2), his detractors' main complaint was that Saul would be unable to save them, thus, they refused to submit to his kingship, which they expressed through withholding their gifts.<sup>560</sup> In our view, Saul's detractors are not base fellows because of their view of Saul—he was ultimately ineffective against the Philistines and

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<sup>560</sup> As R. P. Gordon states, "They bring no token of homage..." R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 122. The statement regarding Saul's response (וַיִּהְיֶה כְּמִתְרִישׁ) lacks in the LXX and 4QSam<sup>a</sup>.

killed by them—but they are base because they refused to pay homage *to YHWH's anointed*. Possibly the narrator means for this episode to be contrasted with David's two-fold reluctance to kill Saul (1 Sam 24; 26).<sup>561</sup>

Moreover, when David goes into exile and reached Bahurim, Shimei comes out cursing and stoning David. The exiled king restrains his men from exacting vengeance on Shimei, proffering that Shimei's insults may be coming from YHWH. Nonetheless, when David later instructs Solomon regarding the kingdom of Judah, he tells Solomon to kill Shimei for his actions (2:9). While David's and Saul's detractors' assessments were correct—David was a killer, and Saul and his whole household would be beheaded by the Philistines—those that insulted David and Saul had publicly despised someone higher on the social ladder, indicating something about the character of the offender and about their intentions toward the established social order.<sup>562</sup> Such actions were considered very serious. Thus, we do not believe that our view is inconsistent with the Deuteronomist's statement about these בְּנֵי בְלִיעַל.

In any event, the contrast between heart and height (what God sees and what man sees) reaches its apex when YHWH corrects the righteous prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:6–7. When Samuel sees Jesse's oldest son Eliab, the prophet assumes that he is YHWH's choice because of his appearance (מְרֹאָהוּ) and the height of his stature (גִּבּוֹת קוֹמָתוֹ), which reminds the reader of Saul's height and election. In contradistinction, YHWH chooses “according to his own heart” and YHWH declares, “Do not look at his appearance or the height of his stature, for I have rejected him. God does not perceive as

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<sup>561</sup> Notice how David honors Saul in each of these episodes. For example, when YHWH gives Saul into hand of David “to do what is good in [his] eyes (בְּאֵינֶיךָ יֵטֵב), David spares Saul, because he is YHWH's anointed,” thus, emphasizing David's good heart (1 Sam 24:5–6, 10). He also bows to Saul (v. 8) and calls him “my lord” (v. 10). David, in contrast calls himself a “dead dog” and a “flea” (v. 14).

<sup>562</sup> Refer to our lexical chapter regarding honor due to people based on position, instead of accomplishments.

humans do (וְהָאָדָם הַזֶּה). Humans look with the eyes (לְעֵינַיִם), but YHWH looks at the heart (וַיַּרְאֵה לְלֵבָב).”<sup>563</sup> These contrasting themes play out most noticeably in the comparison between David and Eliab, David and Goliath and David and Saul. It is in this last comparison that we find the narrator’s justification for diminishing Saul’s house and giving David an eternal house.

Perhaps there is no better story that illustrates these themes than the story of David and Goliath,<sup>564</sup> which the Deuteronomist seemingly adapted from another tradition where Elhanan had killed the Gittite (2 Sam 21:19). The story of David and Goliath not only brings the themes of height, heart and honor together, but the contrast between Saul, David and Eliab. The result is that only David has a heart to defend the honor of God and his people.

Goliath draws up the battle lines by mocking Israel and her king: “Am I not the Philistine, but you are servants of Saul?”<sup>565</sup> While there is likely an insult against the “slavery” of Israel, there is also a slight against their master, Saul.<sup>566</sup> The slight is that Saul’s men are just as cowardly as their king (v. 11). In fact, the boy David encourages

<sup>563</sup> The reconstruction of this verse reads with the LXX and 4QSam<sup>a</sup>. There is a haplography of כ on כֹּאשֶׁר. Also, the text suffered a haplography from כן to כי in כִּי יִרְאֶה אֱלֹהִים כִּי כֵן.

<sup>564</sup> Most likely the LXX<sup>B</sup> represents the original tradition that was expanded over time. The original text is represented by 17:1–11, 32–40, 42–48a, 49–51, 52–54; 18:1–5; and following Ralph Klein, we assert that the text was later expanded to include 17:12–31, 50, 55–58 and 18:1–5. R. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 174.

<sup>565</sup> The LXX<sup>B</sup> reads “Am I not a foreigner, but you are Hebrews of Saul” (ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀλλόφυλος καὶ ὑμεῖς Εβραῖοι τοῦ Σαουλ). The LXX only translates עֶבְרָיִם as Φυλιστιμ thirteen times. The vast majority of times, it is rendered by form of ἀλλοφύλος. Also, it appears to us that the LXX read עֶבְרָיִם as עֶבְרָיִם in this verse. Lastly, note the use of “Hebrews” as a slur in 1 Samuel 4:6, 9. D. T. Tsumura, 193. See Genesis 39:14, 17; 41:12; Exodus 1:16, 19; 2:6, 7.

<sup>566</sup> Also possible is the view of Ralph Klein and Robert Gordon who take the words “עֲבָדִים לְאִשָּׁאֵל” as a slight against Israelite freedom, emphasizing their degrading roles as slaves to Saul (Goliath refers to himself as ‘*the Philistine*’). The difficulty with the view is the number of times the passage mentions being a “slave” to Saul as positive (e.g., 17:32, 34, 36), though perhas Goliath uses it with irony. While we cannot be dogmatic, the emphasis in the passage is a comparison between David, Saul and Goliath. Thus, the statement seems to be on being servants of a cowardly king.

Saul, “Let not the heart of my Lord fail...” (v. 32).<sup>567</sup> We merely note that Saul, the man who stood head and shoulders above all other Israelites (the Goliath of Israel), lacked heart to do what the king of Israel should have been able to do with YHWH’s help: face the Philistine. But when David presents himself to Saul, the king doubts the young shepherd’s ability to defeat the giant because David is just a boy and not a seasoned warrior (v. 33). But David was filled with indignation for YHWH and Israel’s honor, therefore, remained undeterred. With the help of YHWH, David has killed fierce wild animals (vv. 33–37),<sup>568</sup> to which he degradingly likens the uncircumcised Philistine.<sup>569</sup> Saul tries to dress the youth with his armor, but he is unable to wear it (v. 38). Thus, David goes onto the battle armed with a staff (v. 40) and his trust that YHWH will protect him (v. 37).

Goliath is the next victim of appearance. When Goliath saw David (גִּדְיָה), he despised him as nothing (וְיָבִיחָהוּ) because, among other things, David was young and “handsome of appearance” (יָפֶה מִדָּאָה), David apparently lacking the battle scars of a seasoned warrior. Thus, David was not an accomplished warrior worthy of contest with him (v. 42). Sending out David appeared to Goliath to be a mocking gesture, and Goliath begins what is an extended challenge-riposte. Ironically, the Philistine challenges David, “Am I a dog that you come to me with rods?” (1 Sam 17:32) as David had just insultingly compared Goliath to a wild animal that God had helped him beat down in the wilderness. Goliath proceeds to cast insults at David’s gods (אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד).

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<sup>567</sup> See Ralph Klein who reads with the LXX<sup>B</sup>: Μὴ δὴ συμπεσέτω ἡ καρδιά τοῦ κυρίου μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν. R. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 171.

<sup>568</sup> David’s “heart” is demonstrated even before he is filled with YHWH’s spirit in 1 Samuel 16.

<sup>569</sup> David’s speech drips with insults. He calls Goliath “uncircumcised.” In Genesis 34:14, the brothers of Dinah consider marrying an uncircumcised male a disgrace (הַפֶּז). The same is true of Judges 14:3. To fall into the hands of the uncircumcised was a dreadful fate (15:8). David also appears to be slighting Goliath as “this Philistine,” perhaps a riposte in this context on Goliath’s boast that he is “the Philistine” (though see 1 Sam 14:6). David’s last insult likens his foe to a dog (e.g., 1 Sam 24:14).

(וַיִּקְלַל הַפִּלִּשְׁתִּי),<sup>570</sup> and David retorts, “You come to me with a sword, spear and javelin. But I come to you in the name of YHWH of hosts, the God of the armies of the battle lines of Israel whom you mocked (תִּרְבֶּה).” Goliath will see just how powerful the deity he belittles is, because he will bring Israel’s victory through a boy. Thus, the rejection of Saul’s armor comes into even sharper focus, when David proclaims that by defeating the giant: “All the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that this assembly may know that YHWH does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is YHWH’s and he will give you into our hand” (v. 47).<sup>571</sup> The rest of the story is legend, as David quickly kills the Philistine, takes his head to Jerusalem, and puts Goliath’s weapons in his tent.

It seems that the later editors that included the alternate material in the MT and LXX<sup>A</sup>, read the passage through the lens of the contrasting themes that we are emphasizing. While Saul had hidden in the baggage during the time of his honoring (10:22), the young David left his things with the baggage and rushed toward the battle lines (v. 22). Secondly, in verse 28, Eliab—the brother whom YHWH had rejected based on his heart, despite his stature—accuses David of having an evil heart (רַע לִבָּהּ) who just wanted to see the battle (רְאוּת הַמִּלְחָמָה). In actuality, David was concerned with singly fighting the giant to win back the reputation of Israel and YHWH.

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<sup>570</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew construction is unclear. There is a similar construction in Isaiah 8:21 that suggests our conclusion: “They will cast insults at their king and their gods” (וַיִּקְלַל בְּמֶלְכֻם וּבֵּאלֹהֵיהֶם). Confirming our decision is the fact that David responds by confirming that YHWH will defeat Goliath.

<sup>571</sup> The statement has a dual purpose. It is an insult to both “giants.” It is an insult to Saul, because even with armor, the Israelite king is too afraid to face Goliath. It insults Goliath, because even without the king’s armor, he will defeat the Philistine giant with YHWH’s strength. As a side note, it is ironic that David kills Goliath with the giant’s own sword (v. 51). The statement in verse 47 that “YHWH does not save by sword” likely means that human might alone does not win battles. David deflects any honor that he killed Goliath. It is YHWH who bested the Philistine giant who had taunted the Israelite deity.

The later additions to the David-Goliath account re-emphasize Saul and Eliab's lack of heart, as Goliath taunts Israel day and night for forty days (v. 16) without their intervention. Furthermore, Eliab wrongly perceives David to have an "evil heart." He states, "I perceive your arrogance, your evil heart (אֲנִי יִדְעָתִי אֶת־זִדְּמֻךְ וְאֵת רָע לְבָבְךָ)" when he comes to see the battle (v. 28). David has not come to gawk but to fight for YHWH and Israel's honor. Thus, the added material underscores the original themes of heart, height and honor by drawing further contrasts with the two tall, rejected men (Saul and Eliab) who both were too cowardly to face Goliath for over a month.

In sum, as Israel discovered with her first king, what you see is not what you get. Saul, whom the people had wanted and whose stature was unequalled in Israel, lacked the heart to defeat the Philistine champion who mocked him, Israel and YHWH. Instead, the deity chose David, who was concerned with YHWH and Israel's honor. He would courageously slay the giant, armed with his trust in YHWH's name. What the people and even the quintessential prophet Samuel could see was the individual's heart that could be concerned for the deity's honor.

#### 4.1.2.2 The Prelude to the Davidic Promises: The Fulfillment of the Diminishment of Saul and Honoring of David

While the Goliath episode succinctly draws together many of the narrator's themes about the honor of David and dishonor of Saul, David is not granted eternal prestige based on this event alone. The diminishment of Saul continues with David's post-Goliath success and is completed with Meriba'al eating at King David's table (2 Sam 9:11).



Immediately following David's defeat of Goliath in 1 Samuel 18:6–8a; 9, 12a, 13–1620–21a, 22–27, 28–29a),<sup>572</sup> David's rise in public esteem and position is depicted as meteoric, not unlike Samuel's rise. While the women come out to meet King Saul, they cry out: "Saul has killed his thousands, but David his ten thousands!"<sup>573</sup> Saul suspiciously *eyes* (LXX<sup>B</sup> ὑποβλεπόμενος) David as usurper in his midst. YHWH is indeed raising up someone from the dust to sit with princes (cf. 2:8). The addition by the MT and LXX<sup>A</sup> rightfully understands the passage: So instant and great is David's honor, that Saul perceives that David is a threat to his kingship (וַיַּעֲזֹב לוֹ אֶת הַמְּלוּכָה v. 8). In fact, along with this mention, the text's account is punctuated by two more acts of Saul's seeing (vv. 15, 28), which become the springboard for Saul's murderous actions against David.

As a result, Saul sends David out of his presence into battle, but because David is wildly successful due to YHWH's presence, Saul is terrified before him (וַיִּיגָד מִפָּנָיו) and "all Israel and Judah" become loyal to David (אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה),<sup>574</sup> since he is the one who leads them in battle (v. 16). Immediately following,<sup>575</sup> we are told that even from within Saul's house, his daughter Michal "loved David" (v. 20).<sup>576</sup> Thus, Saul seeks to use the fame and loyalty that David receives in his stratagem to kill David. As we noted in our second chapter, Saul honors David by offering his daughter in marriage, knowing that David would have to decline, given his financial status (אִישׁ־רֵשׁ וְנִקְלָה v. 23). Thus, the

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<sup>572</sup> Our discussion follows the LXX<sup>B</sup> agrees with the MT, not what we believe are the later expansions of the text (vv. 1–5; 8b, 10–11, 12b, 17–19, 21b, and 29b–30). Nonetheless, the expansions only serve to confirm many of the points we are making about Israel's social values in these texts.

<sup>573</sup> So, widespread is the women's praise that the Philistines have heard of their song (29:5).

<sup>574</sup> See McCarter's discussion, following Moran and Thompson. P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 313. W. L. Moran, "Ancient near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25, no. 1 (1963): 81.

<sup>575</sup> McCarter argues that this text was relocated from its original position in 19:1–7.

<sup>576</sup> While Michal's "love" can be conceived of as romantic love alone, we understand it much the same way the "love" Jonathan had for David in 1 Samuel 20:17. Saul's children were loyal to David and protected him from their father's treachery.

king demands that David get the foreskins of a hundred Philistines within a certain time frame (v. 25), hoping all the while that David would be killed in battle (v. 25). David accomplishes the task in the allotted time limit (v. 27).<sup>577</sup> Again, the account is punctuated by Saul's recognizing (ראה) YHWH's presence with David and his daughter's loyalty to him. As we have noted previously, the expansion found in the MT and LXX<sup>A</sup> serves to underscore the unheard of fame of David. Thus, David's name became much esteemed (וַיִּקָּר שְׁמוֹ מְאֹד 18:30). From this point on, we will only comment on the themes in the David-Saul narrative that demonstrate the ever-diminishing esteem of Saul and building esteem of David that culminates in Nathan's oracle.

When it becomes evident to Saul that Jonathan has protected David at the feast in chapter 20, Saul humiliates Jonathan publicly: "You son of a rebellious servant girl (בן נערת המרדה!)<sup>578</sup> Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your shame and the shame of the nakedness of your mother (לְבִשְׁתֶּךָ וּלְבִשֵּׁת עֲרוֹת אִמֶּךָ)?" This phrase can refer to the fact that David would inherit the women in Saul's house, hence, Jonathan's mother, as changes in dynasty seemed to imply.<sup>579</sup> In any event, even Michal, who would later turn on David in 2 Samuel 6, aids him in his escape from Saul (1 Sam 19:11–17). Ironically, the flight of David would prove to be the catalyst for the near destruction of the house of Eli (ch. 22).

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<sup>577</sup> While David shows himself to be honorable by not killing Saul on two occasions, David does use this same scheme to kill off Uriah in order to cover his adultery and murder of the noble Hittite warrior.

<sup>578</sup> The MT appears redundant. R. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 204. The phrase is variously represented by the LXX "Son of rebelling young women" (Υἱὲ κορασίων αὐτομολούντων [\*מרדות (ה)נערות] or 4QSam<sup>a</sup> "son of rebelling handmaidens" (בן נערות המרדה). Thus, McCarter's reconstruction, "You son of a rebellious servant girl" (בן נערת המרדה; cf. Jdth 16:12; cf. Wellhausen), seems most convincing.

<sup>579</sup> In the Nathan's judgment against David, the prophet declares to the king, "I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom..." Also, after David had fled the capital, Absalom openly sleeps with David's concubines (2 Sam 16:21–22). Ishbaal accuses Abner of sedition when he accuses his general of sleeping with Rizpah his concubine (2 Sam 3:7). We should see a similar principle in Adonijah's request (1 Kgs 2:20–22).

In the end, the Philistines kill Saul and all but one of his sons on Mount Gilboa (31:1-4). As Saul lies badly wounded, fearing that the uncircumcised Philistines make sport of him while he is alive (לִלְעָלָה; v. 4)<sup>580</sup>—a very shameful death—he asks his armor bearer to kill him. His armor bearer cannot, and so vile is the abasing Saul knows he will receive at the hands of the “uncircumcised,” that the king commits suicide. They shame the dead king, nonetheless. They find Saul’s and his sons’ unburied bodies and defile them all. They cut off his head, strip him of his armor, and hang his and his son’s bodies on the wall of Beth-shan (vv. 8–10).<sup>581</sup> The king’s armor is taken as spoils to the goddess Astarte (v. 10), and the uncircumcised announce the good news to their people and gods (v. 9), rejoicing throughout Philistia (2 Sam 1:20). And with Saul and his house humiliated, the glory of Israel (הַכְּבוֹד יִשְׂרָאֵל) is also slain (2 Sam 1:19). Thus, while the honorable men of Jabesh-Gilead (בְּלִי-אִישׁ חַיִּל)<sup>582</sup> give what seems a fitting burial to Saul and his sons, their death is anything but honorable.<sup>583</sup> David, upon hearing of Saul’s and

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<sup>580</sup> See our previous discussion on this verb in 1 Sam 6:6 (cf. Exod 10:2) where it is associated with humiliating someone in battle. See also Judges 19:25 where the Levite’s concubine is humiliated by the townspeople, and as a result, the Benjamites are humiliated in battle (Jdg 20:45).

<sup>581</sup> Contra David Tsumura and Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, we would resist the suggestion to see Saul’s death as an honorable one. Despite the fact that the burning of the bones in 31:12 appears to be some type honoring gesture from the grateful men of Jabesh-Gilead (cf. 11:1–11), Saul’s house was nearly wiped out by the “uncircumcised,” and the bodies of he and his sons hung exposed throughout the night (v. 12). Thus, in Deuteronomic thinking, the men were under the curse of God (קָלַלְתָּ אֱלֹהִים). D. T. Tsumura, 656. H. W. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 234.

<sup>582</sup> Normally this word is translated “mighty” or “valiant,” which is possible (Jdg 3:29; 20:44, 46). It is also very possible, however, that this phrase connotes “worthiness,” someone who possesses social “strength” (e.g., 1 Kgs 1:42; Ruth 2:1; 3:11 [Ruth herself]).

<sup>583</sup> The burning of the bones is an obscure gesture, though since the men of Jabesh-Gilead are honorable and David later praises them (2 Sam 2:4–7), the act appears to be honoring. Cyrus Gordon tried to link the burning with honorable burial practices in Indo-European epic. C. H. Gordon. *Before the Bible: The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilisations*. London: Collins, 1962. Herman Brichto avers that the practice kept the bones from being exposed again. H. C. Brichto. “Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife: A Biblical Complex,” *HUCA* 44 (1973): 37, n. 58. We might tentatively suggest that the burning of the bones and the burial under the tamarisk have different social valences. Since the bodies of Saul and his sons hung all night, the land was threatened with pollution (Deut 21:23). Thus, burning the bones might suggest some type of ritual cleansing from pollution before burial in the ground. Though no such requirement or rite appears in Israel’s law, the seraphs in Isaiah touch the prophet’s lips with a burning

Jonathan's demises, appears to honor them with an elegy (2 Sam 1), all the while never intending to bend the knee to Ishbaal, Saul's final heir (2:9).<sup>584</sup>

Saul's house is nearly completely diminished now. Judah proclaims David king at Hebron (2:4), while Abner installs Ishbaal over Israel. Ishbaal's reign proves to be as cursed as his father's. In 1 Samuel 3:1, David's house, we are told, was becoming increasingly stronger (וְדָוִד הָלַךְ וַחֲזָקָה) and Saul's house<sup>585</sup> increasingly weaker (הַלְכִים וְדָלִים).<sup>586</sup> In other words, YHWH was making David more כבד, while Saul more קלל—in fecundity, military success and political power.<sup>587</sup> While the end of 2 Samuel 2 concerned itself with the military superiority of the David over Saul's house, David, we are told in 2 Samuel 3:2–5, added more wives, concubines and children. During the protracted war between the two houses, the apparent political weakness of Ishbaal left the door open for Abner to become increasingly “stronger within Saul's house” (שָׂאֵל)

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coal to cleanse him from guilt (Isa 6:6–7). Also, high places are burned because they pollute the land (e.g., 2 Kgs 23:30). Whatever the case, the burial under a tamarisk tree and the eventual interment of Saul and his sons in the family grave (2 Sam 21:14) suggest an honorable burial, despite the dishonorable life and death. Such a fitting burial may indeed be in tension with the shameful life and death of Saul. Certainly the text appears to present Saul in somewhat positive light at times, and perhaps this tension owes itself to the varying sources used by the Deuteronomist who was reluctant to interfere with the text he chose.

<sup>584</sup> Jonathan's son Meriba'al is Saul's last heir and is described as “struck of feet,” (נָכַח רַגְלָיו) (2 Sam 4:4) or “lame in both his feet” (פָּסַח שְׁתֵּי רַגְלָיו) (2 Sam 9:13). Likely these phrases refer to the inability of Saul's heir to walk, though Matthews and Benjamin understand “feet” as “testicles” (e.g., Isa 7:20). As Matthews and Benjamin put it, “Since ‘feet’ in the world of the Bible is a euphemism for male genitals and a phallic symbol of power, the use of these phrases here may indicate that Meriba'al is not simply unable to walk, but the household of Saul no longer works land and gives birth to children in Israel.” V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin, *Social World*, 169. Given that Meriba'al had a son, we take this phrase more literally (2 Sam 9:6).

<sup>585</sup> The Book of Kings continues to contrast the northern and southern royal households, though Jeroboam's house is understood paradigmatically due to Jeroboam's cultic sin (1 Kgs 12:32; 2 Kgs 10:29).

<sup>586</sup> This depiction is similar to the Deuteronomistic curses, though cast in a different semantic light, higher and lower: “Aliens among you ascend above you higher and higher, and you will descend lower and lower” (Deut 28:34).

<sup>587</sup> The two mentions of David's house growing stronger (וְדָוִד הָלַךְ וַחֲזָקָה) or greater (הָלֹךְ וְגִדּוּל) in 2 Samuel 3:1 and 5:10, respectively, are associated with statements regarding David's political (3:17–19; 36; 5:1–3), military (2:29–32; 5:6–9), and familial honor (3:2–5; 5:13–15). Thus, minus the mention of wealth, we see the same relationship between honor, high position and progeny. It is not until Hiram king of Tyre blesses David with a palace that he receives great wealth (5:11).

וְאַבְנֵר הָיָה מִתְחַזֵּק בְּבֵית (v. 6). After Ishbaal accuses Abner of sleeping with Saul's concubine (an act of usurpation), perhaps implied by the idiom מִתְחַזֵּק בְּבֵית שָׁאִיל, the furious Abner promises David that he will deliver all of Israel to the Judahite king (3:12). After Abner's untimely death at the hands of Joab, Ishbaal suffers the same fate as his father, beheading, but Ishbaal would die by the hand of two of his own captains (4:5–8). Except for the lame Meriba'al who will be a client of David, Saul's house is nearly completely diminished, "fulfilling" the song of Hannah on multiple fronts.

In comparison, the narrator represents David's power as growing in quick fashion: He makes a covenant with all of Israel to be their king (5:1–5), gets dominion over the Canaanites when he conquers the reputedly impregnable Jebus (5:6–9), makes Jebus his new capital, and most of all appears poised to affect international politics. As 2 Samuel 5:10 states, "David became greater and greater, because YHWH of hosts was with him." Recognizing David's equality or fearing his possible superiority, King Hiram of Tyre builds David a palace (5:11–12). Though the text of Samuel does not say, Hiram's magnanimous gift was meant to express loyalty by honoring his new covenantal partner with a gift suitable to David's hard-won esteem (cf. לְדָוִד אֱהָב הָיָה הַיָּרֵם; 1 Kgs 5:1, 12).<sup>588</sup> The implicit purpose of the gift was first to honor David and, second, to demonstrate to other nations the strength of the bond between Tyre and Israel—or more accurately between Hiram's and David's houses). Adding to his political-military accomplishments, David's house grows very strong when he adds more wives, concubines and children (3:2–5; 5:13–15).

In contrast, the narrator depicts Saul's house as growing weak, impotent and nearly dead. Once Ishbaal is murdered, all that remains of Saul's house is the crippled

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<sup>588</sup> Such texts should give us some pause regarding the identification of covenants based on the presence or absence of the word in a given passage.

Meriba'al.<sup>589</sup> Thus, the narrator's commentary is appropriate: "David perceived that YHWH had established him as king over Israel and that he had exalted his kingdom (נָשָׂא מִמְּלָכָהוּ) for the sake of his people Israel" (5:12). David's greatness is proved true when he completely routes the Philistines, the foes who nearly wiped out Saul's family (5:17ff.).

The themes of David's honor and Saul's dishonor come into sharp focus just before David is granted an eternal dynasty, continuing to use the themes of "heart" and "sight." When YHWH blessed the house of Obed-edom where David had taken the ark, David perceived that it was time to move it into his new capital. So, David danced before YHWH with all of his might to the sounds of trumpets and shouting (6:14–15). Michal, Saul's daughter, despised David in her heart (וַתִּבְזֶה לֹא בְלִבָּהּ),<sup>590</sup> presumably because with the bringing of Israel's holy object into his capital city, David's glory was now complete and her father's had become nothing (קֵלֵל).

In celebration, David attempts to give gifts in the deity, people and royal household:<sup>591</sup> the deity by sacrificing to YHWH (v. 18); Israel by giving food to the

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<sup>589</sup> After Meriba'al pledges fealty to David (2 Sam 9:6), David assigns Meriba'al to eat as the king's table (v. 7). While the gesture is an ostensible honoring of Meriba'al, Jonathan, and Saul, it also serves to make Meriba'al a dependent of David. As Matthew and Benjamin note, "Monarchs bring leaders to eat at their tables for two purposes: location and indoctrination. With Meriba'al at his table, David always knows where he is and has regular opportunity to teach Meriba'al how to support state policy. Patron states always bring leaders from client states to the mother country for education and military training." V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin, *Social World*, 170. They continue later, "By appointing Ziba to administer Saul's property, David uses the tradition of the legal guardian to confiscate the land of Saul. Ziba becomes a state official (1 Chron 6:39–66; 1 Kgs 10:28), and serves David as the "husband's brother" (Deut 25:5–10) for the household. Consequently, Ziba works for David, not Meriba'al." Ibid, 171.

<sup>590</sup> As A. Graeme Auld comments, "Michal has 'seen' David; believing she understood the significance of what she was seeing, she despised him 'in her heart.'" A. G. Auld, 422. David appears to have acted shamefully, though she cannot perceive David's heart (like YHWH can). David has celebrated YHWH and abased himself for the sake of celebrating his God's glory. David vows to abase himself further for YHWH. Thus, again we see the principle of self-lowering as a form of humility.

<sup>591</sup> For King and Stager, David's actions would be equivalent to giving gifts in each of Israel's three-tiered structure, though not in the right order. At the bottom of the structure lay Israel's ancestral houses. Just above it was situated the house of the king; and at the top of the structure sat the house of the deity. King and Stager, 4–5.

people (v. 19); and his household by giving them gifts (בָּרַךְ, v. 20).<sup>592</sup> When David attempts to approach his house, Michal takes the opportunity to rebuke David for dishonoring himself in celebration. She sarcastically announces, “How the king of Israel ‘honored himself’ (נִכְבָּד) today when he uncovered himself today in the sight of the wenches<sup>593</sup> of his officials, just like some dancer<sup>594</sup> who completely uncovers himself (בְּהִגְלוֹת נְגִלוֹת)! ”<sup>595</sup> Michal’s slight on David’s character at his most glorious moment expresses her disrespect (“hatred”) for David and her love for her father’s house. Thus David replies to her in verse 21, “In YHWH’s presence I will dance! Blessed is YHWH<sup>596</sup> who chose me over your father and over all of his house (מֵאֲבִיךָ וּמִכָּל-בֵּיתוֹ) when he appointed me as prince over his people, over Israel. I will revel before YHWH and<sup>597</sup> will abase myself (נִקְלָהִי) even more than this than this!<sup>598</sup> I will abase myself (שָׁפַל) in my

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<sup>592</sup> Possibly “bless” just means to “greet,” especially if we restore אָהָב on the basis of the LXX καὶ εὐλόγησεν αὐτόν. McCarter also notes that David had already wished for a blessing on his house, which normally followed such ceremonies. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 185 (cf. 182). And we do find Azitawadda blessing his own house and the people in the city. The only difference is that unlike KAI 26 AIII, David is approaching his house to bless it, which does not appear to be part of the ceremony.

<sup>593</sup> See K. P. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 185.

<sup>594</sup> The MT reads “empty ones” (רִיק), while LXX<sup>B</sup> translators likely read τὼν ὀρχουμένων (דָּרְקָה). Driver compares the MT form to Judges 9:4 and 11:3. S. R. Driver, 272. Harry Orlinsky argues convincingly in support of the LXX. H. M. Orlinsky, “*Hā-rōqḏīm* for *hā-rēqīm* in II Samuel 6 20,” *JBL* 65, no. 1 (1946): 25–35. Most commentators follow the LXX.

<sup>595</sup> Possibly בְּהִגְלוֹת נְגִלוֹת represents an early, erroneous correction based on a repetition of הִגְלוֹת (GKC §75y), as this occurrence represents the only time the infinitive construct is augmented by the infinitive absolute. Since the LXX also contains the construction, we have cautiously chosen to retain it. Most translations understand this phrase בְּהִגְלוֹת נְגִלוֹת (LXX ἀποκαλύπτεται ἀποκαλυφθεὶς) as “shamelessly uncovers” (KJV, NRSV, NASB, NLT), though the JPS renders it “expose,” (perhaps siding with GKC) and the NIV translates it as “going around half-naked.” A. A. Anderson understands the construction in a continuative sense “might go on exposing.” A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, Publisher, 1989), 98. We tentatively see the intensive use of the infinitive absolute as an exaggeration in keeping with the hyperbolic tone of Michal’s speech: “completely uncover.”

<sup>596</sup> We follow the LXX<sup>B</sup>. The MT tradition likely suffered a haplography due to the word אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה: אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה > לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְשָׁחַתְתִּי בָרֶךְ יְהוָה.

<sup>597</sup> We have constructed much of this passage based on the LXX<sup>B</sup>, following Orlinsky and McCarter after him. See H. M. Orlinsky, 27–28, n. 5; P. K. McCarter, *I Samuel*, 185–86.

<sup>598</sup> The verb as we have shown previously has a sense of being socially despised, treated as nothing.

own eyes,<sup>599</sup> but by the wenches about which you speak, I will be honored.”<sup>600</sup> Even if David would suffer a worse indignity, he would still be honored, and in comparison, Saul’s house would still be decimated. And in a talionic curse (i.e., I will curse those who curse you), the text recounts the penultimate shame of Saul’s house: “Michal, *the daughter of Saul*, had no children to the day of her death” (v. 23). When Michal shames David about his genitals, she brings a curse on hers. And as Graeme Auld states, “Michal’s own shame (the unstated opposite of David’s honor) will consist in her perpetual childlessness...this represents another slight on the family of Saul.”<sup>601</sup> Except for David’s faithfulness to Jonathan’s lame (or impotent) son Meriba’al, Saul’s house has been made insignificant, gutted of all esteem and position.

Having been given a palace by Tyre, having transferred the ark to Jerusalem, having been given a palace by Hiram, having defeated the Philistines, and having witnessed the diminishment of Saul’s house, David has rest all around. (2 Sam 7:1).<sup>602</sup>

#### 4.1.4 Summary

In summary, we have seen the migration of the honor of the north to the south, both in the priestly and royal lines of Israel. We have seen how the lowly Hannah’s song of praise and thanksgiving in the hands of the narrator operated a prolepsis of how the honor of the houses of Eli and Saul would be diminished and eventually given to Zadok and David. Both northern houses could have received eternal prestige, but lost

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<sup>599</sup> McCarter believes that MT’s בְּעֵינַי and LXX’s ὀφθαλμοῖς σου (בְּעֵינֶיךָ) was originally בְּעֵינַי, based on one MS of the MT tradition. The manuscript evidence is too slim to support his conjecture. Possibly, there was a corruption in the last letter, giving rise to various, equal possibilities.

<sup>600</sup> The LXX and MT traditions take וְעַם-הָאֲמֹהֹת as belonging to different clauses, the MT the following clause and the LXX the previous clause. If שָׁפָל was meant to be associated with הָאֲמֹהֹת then we might have expected a reiteration of בְּעֵינַי before הָאֲמֹהֹת or at least no intervening עַם.

<sup>601</sup> A. G. Auld, 415.

<sup>602</sup> We will discuss this claim below, as David’s peace is certainly not unqualified or absolute.



it due to treating the deity as inconsequential in the cult. The fates of Eli and Saul's houses would be depicted in much the same terms, in fact.

In addition, these fates (whether for honor or shame) would be brought out in various contrasts: between heart and sight (Zadok-Eli) or between height and heart (Saul-David). Eli's blindness depicted the state of his heart. And Saul's height was a deceptive guide to his suitability for a king. Israel had demanded a king, and they received Saul ("what was asked for"), a person upon whom they pinned their hopes (1 Sam 9:20). The Israelites' desire was set on a king who could lead them in battle, a "giant" among the Israelites to counter the Philistines. He had the stature of a king, but not the heart of one. Had Saul not committed an offense against the cult, YHWH would have established his house forever (1 Sam 13; cf. 2 Sam 7:15). As a result of his sin, however, Saul and his house would be diminished (shamed) and meet a devastating end. And in Saul's place, YHWH would choose David, whose loyal heart only YHWH could see and to whom he would give a dynasty of unending prestige (2 Sam 7). As we are about to see, it is only in the context of a loyal, honoring relationship that YHWH can rightly, freely bestow upon David the highest honor of an eternal covenant.

The drift of power and prestige from north to south would not be immediate, however. The fulfillment of Hannah's "prophecy" against both northern houses would wait until Meriba'al had become a client of David and Abiathar had been deposed in the Book of Kings. Only then would Solomon build YHWH's house, fulfilling Nathan's Oracle to David.<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>603</sup> Only when every *viable* Saulide is eliminated is David's palace built (2 Sam 5:11). Similarly Solomon undertakes building YHWH's temple when the last Elide has been driven from office (1 Kgs 2:26-27; 1 Kgs 8). Ishida also suggests a similar idea, though we differ slightly (see below). T. Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (BZAW 142; Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1977), 98.

#### 4.2 The Promise<sup>604</sup> of an Eternal House of David and the future House of YHWH: 2 Samuel 7 (cf. 1 Chron 17)

The Philistines are routed. The Phoenician king has recognized the legitimacy of the Davidic throne and honored David by giving him a costly cedar house when they made a covenant. Saul's house now lies shamed and defeated. And David has finally transferred the ark to his new capital. And for now, David has a measure of peace.

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<sup>604</sup> The literature on the formal understanding of whether 2 Samuel 7 represents a covenant or merely divine promises is too vast to treat here. We can merely outline our support for the covenantal view. First, it is acknowledged that the word בְּרִית does not appear in the passage, and all reference to 2 Samuel 7 as a covenant are late (e.g., 2 Sam 23:5; 1 Kings 8:1; 2 Chron. 13:5; 21:7; Psalm 89). Steven McKenzie believes that a covenantal understanding of the passage is late. See S. L. McKenzie, "The Typology of the Davidic Covenant," *The Land That I Will Show You: Essays on the History and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East in Honor of J. Maxwell Miller*. (Edited by J. A. Dearman and M. P. Graham; JSOT Supp 343; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 152–178. The language and many elements in the passage seem to resemble suzerain-vassal covenants. For example, we have a preamble of sorts when the sovereign is named (though in oracular pronouncement): "Thus says the YHWH of hosts" (v. 8b). It is followed by a historical prologue that recites the past acts toward David for the effect of building trust in and loyalty to the sovereign (vv. 8–9a). See P. J. Calderone, *Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty Treaty; 2 Samuel 7, 8-16* (Logos 1; Manila: Loyola House of Studies, 1966), 44. There is a stipulation (v. 14b), a curse (v. 14b), and blessings (e.g., vv. 15). We might note that the עוֹה in 7:14 is an allusion to Deuteronomistic stipulations (cf. 1 Kgs 8:47). First Kings 11:1–12 applies 1 Samuel 7:14 in the context of Solomon's violation of the Sinaitic prohibitions against idolatry. So, while it does not formally represent a covenant (there are no witnesses, deposition, etc.), many elements are there. In addition, the language betrays a suzerain vassal relationship. That YHWH and the king are father-son (v. 14a) likely represents suzerain-vassalage language. F. C. Fensham, "Father and Son as Terminology for Treaty and Covenant," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (Edited by H. Goedicke; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 121–28. In addition, YHWH will never take his "love" from David's seed. W. L. Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25, no. 1 (1963): 77–87. It should also be noted that passages like the covenant between David and Hiram in 1 Samuel 5:15 also do not contain the word covenant, though likely represent one, as Hiram was a "friend (i.e., lover) to David all of his days (אֶהָב הָיָה הֵרִים לְדָוִד)." W. L. Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background," 80. Only at the end of Hiram's correspondence with Solomon do we read of a בְּרִית (5:26). William Moran notes that אֶהָב הָיָה הֵרִים in 7:28 can denote "[a friendly] relationship effected through a treaty." W. L. Moran, "A Note on the Treaty Terminology of the Sefire Stelas," *JNES* 22, no. 3 (1963): 173–76 (175). We also find יָדַע used to mean "recognize as legitimate" in treaties. H. B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew *Yāda*," *BASOR* 181 (1966): 32–33. Lastly, if one is inclined to date the construction of the Deuteronomistic History and Psalm 89 to the exile, as many scholars do, it would be hard to explain how or why we should not consider 2 Samuel 7 a covenant, when clearly the Deuteronomist's contemporaries did. In any event, the most sustained research to classify 2 Samuel 7 as a covenant from a form critical perspective was conducted by Moshe Weinfeld, who concludes that the Abrahamic and Davidic promises resemble royal grants based on form, structure, and linguistic grounds. And he understands the father-son language as adoptive. A few representative and influential studies include: M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90, no. 2 (1970): 184–203; "Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and its Influence on the West," *JAOS* 93, no. 2 (1973): 190–99; "בְּרִית, *Berith*," *TDOT* 2:253–79. There are a bevy of scholars too numerous to note here who have followed Weinfeld in whole or in part. More recently, Gary Knoppers has challenged Weinfeld's identification on each of these grounds, seeing the biblical authors as drawing on a multiplicity of genres depiction of the promises to the Davidides. G. N. Knoppers, "Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?" *JAOS* 116, no. 4 (1996): 670–97. Thus, we are cautioned in adopting his views. See Ishida who relies more on Mesopotamian parallels. T. Ishida, 88–91.

What is left is for David to honor YHWH and to consolidate his power further by building the deity a temple. But in a surprising move, the deity refuses David's offer and in place of it, promises him permanent royal legitimacy, the ideological focal point for the Deuteronomist's narrative.

Following McCarthy, Cross and others,<sup>605</sup> we would hold that the Davidic covenant is integral to the Deuteronomistic History itself. With regard to the Book of Samuel's social values, we have sought to this point in our discussion to show how honor (obeying YHWH and being concerned with the prestige of his name) and shame (slighting of YHWH through disobedience) lead to the loss of eternal position of the two northern spheres of power and lead to the promises of enduring position in the South. We saw, for example, how Saul and Eli disqualified their houses from the eternal honor of serving YHWH by slighting the deity in the very place designed to honor his name, the cult. YHWH declared that he would only honor those who honor him, and YHWH was able to see that David's heart was different (1 Sam 16:7). David was "better"<sup>606</sup> than Saul. And David would display his superior heart most dramatically when, before he

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<sup>605</sup> D. J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History," *JBL* 84, no. 2 (1965): 131–38. A. A. Anderson states, "2 Sam 7 is, without doubt, the theological highlight of the Books of Samuel...if not of the Deuteronomistic History as a whole." Frank Moore Cross explores the centrality of 2 Samuel 7 in theology of the Book of Kings. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 279–85. A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 112. McCarter, doubtlessly following Cross, states that "we see that Nathan's oracle will remain an important theological reference point even later in the Books of Kings, where it provides the basis for a *central motif* in the Deuteronomistic theology of the history of the divided kingdom..." (italics mine). P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 220. F. Stolz, *Das Erste Und Zweite Buch Samuel* (ZBK AT, vol. 9; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981): 220. The same view is proffered by Kathleen Robertson, who states, "This chapter is the most important theological text in the books of Samuel and perhaps in the entire Deuteronomic History." K. Robertson, *Numbers–Samuel* (NIB II; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1254. Hertzberg states that "Chapter 7 is the climax of the whole Davidic tradition." H. Hertzberg, 284. S. Also, see S. L. McKenzie, "Notes on Samuel," in *New Oxford Annotated Bible* (3rd ed.; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 603. R. P. Gordon goes as far as to call the text the "ideological summit" of the Old Testament. R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 233.

<sup>606</sup> The words *הַטֹּב מִמֶּנִּי* refer to David's character that would be demonstrated in his strict faithfulness to YHWH in general, but dramatically a chapter later in the David-Goliath narrative where David, concerned with the honor of Israel and YHWH, slays the Philistine giant and shows himself to be superior to the cowering Saul, Israel's "giant."

bravely faced the Philistine giant, he would seek to buttress cowardly King Saul's heart. As the narrator would have us see, David's faithful heart would be rewarded with the eternal power and prestige from which Saul had been disqualified.

This section of the chapter has only one goal, to explore how the values of honor and shame, however conceived, inform our understanding of the Davidic covenant. What we hope to show is that the honor of the deity and king are contrasted in the dual concepts of YHWH's temple and David's dynasty. In particular, David's gift to the deity is a way of augmenting the deity's honor, and as a result, consolidating the king's power and glory. *The deity, however, refuses the gift in order to show that he alone will freely secure the Davidic line, apart from what the symbol of the monumental architecture communicates.*

Before beginning, a brief word is in order regarding the literary analysis of the passage that has received an incredible amount of attention from biblical scholars. So intense has interest been in this passage, that a full treatment would distract us from our current task, and very little can be added to McCarter's brilliant summary of the various schools of thought on the pre-history of 2 Samuel 7.<sup>607</sup> It should suffice to say that the cause of scholarly angst is trying to unravel the tension created between Nathan's initial acceptance in verse 3 and YHWH's absolute refusal in verses 5–7. McCarter states, "Indeed it is difficult to think of v. 3 and vv. 5–7 as the work of a single author."<sup>608</sup> This problem is exacerbated by verse 13, which gives Solomon the right to build the temple. Thus, many scholars have sought to understand the passage by

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<sup>607</sup> P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 210–17.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid*, 196.

unraveling its anti-temple and pro-temple pre-history (along with the various later Deuteronomistic interpolations).

The current trend among scholars is to treat the text as a unity imposed by the Deuteronomistic historian.<sup>609</sup> Carlson states, "...the compositional structure of chapter 7 does not allow the drawing of definite conclusions regarding its pre-Deuteronomic form."<sup>610</sup> McCarthy believes the passage is "a unity in form and content" that was redacted to form a central interpretive passage in the Deuteronomistic History.<sup>611</sup> Cross, who follows McCarthy, notes twenty-four common Deuteronomistic expressions and themes in the passage.<sup>612</sup> He concludes based on this evidence, "The unity of 2 Samuel 7 is a unity imposed on his sources by the mind and point of view of the Deuteronomistic historian."<sup>613</sup> Cross, however, attempts to understand the pre-history behind the text.<sup>614</sup> More recently, John Van Seters, after rejecting Cross's pre-redactional reconstruction of the Nathan's Oracle, reaffirms, "From the point of view of form criticism there is no

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<sup>609</sup> Perhaps the most influential attempt to see the chapter as a literary unity was proffered by Hermann's form-critical argument that likens 2 Samuel 7 to the Egyptian *Königsnovelle*. In *Königsnovelle* the king, while sitting in his house, decides to build a temple, announces it, and he is praised for his wisdom. In addition, the deity is seen as the king's father. A. Hermann. *Die Ägyptische Königsnovelle* (Leipziger Ägyptologische Studien 10; Glückstadt; New York: J. J. Augustin, 1938). The theory has come under increasing fire by recent scholarship. Cross criticizes various parts of his view from the setting of the king sitting in his house to "making the king a name." See Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 247–49. Perhaps the best summary criticism is found in McCarter, "Many continue to think it odd that the *Königsnovelle*, the very purpose of which is to praise the king for a great accomplishment, should be appealed to in connection with a biblical passage that not only lacks any such accomplishment will not be achieved." P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 214. Ishida notes that Mesopotamian analogies are more fitting. He not only finds other examples where deities have refused kingly request to construct temples (86–87), but also identifies Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian examples that match Nathan's Oracle in theme and style. T. Ishida, 88–91.

<sup>610</sup> R. A. Carlson, *David, The Chosen King: A Traditio-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), 105. Also see T. Ishida, 98.

<sup>611</sup> D. J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7," 131.

<sup>612</sup> F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 253–54.

<sup>613</sup> *Ibid*, 252.

<sup>614</sup> While other scholars agree with McCarthy's assessment that 1 Samuel 7:1–17 has been edited by Deuteronomist, they attempt to construct a pre-history of the text (Veijola, Mettinger, McCarter), through they differ in detail.

reason why the whole chapter cannot be considered the work of one author.”<sup>615</sup> Cross’s evidence, we believe, is decisive in finding a thoroughgoing working of earlier sources, though we are less confident that earlier traditions can be recovered. Thus, in our attempt to analyze the social values of Israel, our approach most resembles that of McCarthy:

In an argument of this type the analysis of possible literary sources for the present form of II Sam 7 is not essential. As a matter of fact, the chapter seems to be a unity in form and content, and it does show the marks of the deuteronomic hand. But whatever the origins and the history of the growth of the text, whatever its possible composite character, it is the actual text as it stands in the deuteronomic history which matters. This is the text which functions as an integral part of the literary complex. The problem here is to show this function.<sup>616</sup>

In our case, that function of the text is how it is informed by the social values of ancient Israel, and in this case, the modes of exchange. In particular, we will try to understand the passage between David and YHWH as a three-part “gift” exchange between the king and his deity, though it achieves its message by breaking the social conventions associated with rejecting or, conversely, accepting gifts. For this reason, we break down the chapter in the following way: David graciously offers to glorify YHWH with a house and the deity firmly refuses (vv. 1–7 // 1 Chron 17:1–6); YHWH makes a counteroffer to build David an enduring house (vv. 8–17 // 1 Chron 17:7–15); David praises YHWH for his offer of an enduring house (vv. 18–29 // 1 Chron 17:16–27). Along with our treatment of 2 Samuel 7, we will note that if there are any significant differences in the way in which the Chronicler presents these two values with respect to YHWH’s promises to David. Lastly, we discuss how these values are refracted Psalm

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<sup>615</sup> J. van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 273.

<sup>616</sup> D. J. McCarthy, “II Samuel 7,” 131.

89<sup>617</sup> when Israel had experienced an apparent breach in YHWH's faithfulness to these promises, which caused David's house to suffer great shame.

#### 4.2.1 The Prolegomena to the promise: David's gift of a temple and YHWH's refusal (2 Sam 7:1–7 // 1 Chron 17:1–6)

Having brought the ark into his capital, David seeks to honor YHWH by building him a house, a decision that Nathan seemingly believes is appropriate.<sup>618</sup> As R. P. Gordon notes, "In the ancient world...a god who lacked a proper temple was in danger of being cultically inferior."<sup>619</sup> In fact, as Ishida notes, "[In Mesopotamia] one of the most important tasks of the king was the representative of society *vis-à-vis* the divine world was the build or repairing of a temple."<sup>620</sup> Surprisingly, YHWH flatly rejects his offer.<sup>621</sup> The subsequent refusal of the gift is puzzling and can certainly be taken as divine displeasure with David (note 1 Kgs 8:18) and as an insult to the king.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> The texts are clearly related in our view, though it is difficult to ascertain how. Are they all recensions of the same tradition as McKenzie would have it? J. L. McKenzie, "The Dynastic Oracle: II Samuel 7," *ThS* (1947): 187–218. Or is, as we would likely agree, Psalm 89:20–38 represents an interpretation of the original tradition? N. Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," in *Biblical and Other Studies* (Philip W. Lown Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies 1; Brandeis University. Studies and Texts; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 29. For a further bibliography, see T. Ishida, 81–82.

<sup>618</sup> In fact in both passages where we find the phrase "וְהָיָה לָכֶם מִקֵּל-אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִסְבִּיב" (Deut 12:10–11; 25:19–26:2), there is an injunction to build YHWH a temple in the place that he has chosen. So, David is presented as being faithful to the Deuteronomic Covenant.

<sup>619</sup> R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 236.

<sup>620</sup> T. Ishida, 85.

<sup>621</sup> Ishida notes several examples of kings who had failed to build temples. *Šamaš* allows Nebuchadnezzar II to rebuild his temple in Sippar, though had not allowed previous kings to do so. Enlil twice refused to allow a temple to be built for him.<sup>621</sup> Zimir-Lim's attempt to build a "house" (possibly a temple) and receives a rejection in a divine revelation. T. Ishida, 86–87.

<sup>622</sup> McKenzie, describing the etiological function of the 2 Samuel 7 states, "...it explains the tradition, scandalous by ancient Near Eastern standards, that the temple in Jerusalem was built not by the righteous founder of the dynasty but by his son." S. L. McKenzie, *Typology*, 175. He continues by stating that in 1 Kings 8:18, the Deuteronomic historian attempted to bolster David's reputation by stating that David's motives were good." We believe that David's defense is already located in the text itself, as we say below. In any event, YHWH's rejection 1 Chronicles 17:4 differs: "You will not build a house for me." (לֹא אֶתָּה תִּבְנֶה-לִּי בַּיִת לְשֹׁכְתִי), while in 2 Samuel 7:5 "is it *you* who will build a house for me to live in? (הֲאַתָּה תִּבְנֶה-לִּי בַּיִת לְשֹׁכְתִי). Possibly, the *Vorlagen* between the two accounts differ. It is also possible,

There can be many reasons for the rejection of this type of gift in particular, which we will explore below. Moreover, this would have represented David's second cultic embarrassment, the first being David's initial attempt to bring the ark into his new capital (2 Sam 5).

Interestingly, the ancients did not seem to have an exact window into this problem either. That is, there appear to have been many possible competing political-religious interpretations that could explain the rejection, some embarrassing.<sup>623</sup> Thus, ancient reflection on this passage shows a cluster of explanations. The tradition preserved in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17 states, among other things, that YHWH has never requested a temple, and is in no need for one (2 Sam 7:6–7 // 1 Chron 17:5–6). There is also a hint that hostilities have not ceased (v. 11a). In a second interpretation Solomon (שלמה), whose name means “peace,”<sup>624</sup> claims that the reason that David was not allowed to build the temple was because his father was always beset by warfare (1 Kgs 5:17).<sup>625</sup> Interestingly, the Chronicler adds an additional reason relating to warfare,

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however, that the Chronicler, who actively edits his text, saw the question as a slight. And the Chronicler also omits other embarrassing accounts (e.g., the David-Bathsheba and connected Absalom-David narratives), except the census narrative (1 Chron 21), which is critical to the Chronicler because it introduces the site of the future site of the temple (1 Chron 22:1). This latter passage also softens the insult to David, because he is granted the ability to gather all of the temple's materials (1 Chron 22:2–19) and hand Solomon the plans for the temple to Solomon (1 Chron 28:11).

<sup>623</sup> Most commentators, for example, McCarter, side with texts like 1 Kings 5:3 and view Chronicles as a later priestly understanding. For McCarter and McKenzie following him, 2 Samuel 7:1 is a later gloss that found its way into the text and was likely based on 7:11. P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 191. S. L. McKenzie, *Typology*, 174. Others believe that the passage is possibly historically dislocated from the end of David's reign. A. A. Anderson, 2 Samuel, 116. Likely the passage was in the Chronicler's *Vorlage*. Sarah Japhet argues that the Deuteronomist is showing David's fidelity to Deuteronomy 12:10–11 (the place where YHWH would choose), though the Chronicler, that peace and choice of the place of the temple would only come under Solomon. S. Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1993), 328. We would argue that 2 Samuel 7:1 makes sense in context, following from chapter 6, as long as one understands the “peace” as temporary (cf. v. 11a).

<sup>624</sup> First Chronicles 22:9 explicitly ties the concept of peace with temple-building ideology to Solomon's name as a symbol of the character of his reign.

<sup>625</sup> The *Kethib-Qere* has quite large implications for the passage. First, if one reads with the *Kethib* תַּחַת כְּפֹת רֵגְלָיו (LXX: αὐτοῦ; VULG: *pedum eius*), the text implies that David YHWH was faithful by allowing David to conquer all of his enemies (1 Sam 7:11a; perhaps the implication of 2 Sam 21:15–22), and started



though apparently from the point of view of his cultic impurity. In 1 Chronicles 22:8 (cf. 28:3), David explains that YHWH kept him from building the temple because he had shed too much blood in his presence, though Solomon is allowed to build it because he is a *אִישׁ שְׁלָמָה* “man of peace” (22:9). Obviously, many of these explanations are associated with the idea that there was a lack of peace during David’s reign, despite 2 Samuel 7:1 (cf. 2 Sam 8, 10; Absalom’s revolt).<sup>626</sup> And one is left to wonder if the ancients believed solutions like we find in 1 Chronicles 22 exhausted all of the possible reasons for YHWH’s rejection of David’s offer.

Modern approaches, usually frustrated with the seemingly intractable conflicts in the text (e.g., Nathan’s initial acceptance and subsequent refusal) proliferate more historically, rather than textually-based, interpretive reasons for YHWH’s refusal. A. A. Anderson, following McCarter, looks at the refusal as the text’s second (anti-temple) stage of literary development. Anderson and McCarter assign this stratum to the early exilic period to explain why the temple was destroyed. The reason is that YHWH had never wanted it in the first place.<sup>627</sup> Also, citing 2 Kings 18:22 and Jeremiah 44:15–19, Anderson suggests that it might have been a “reaction against the Deuteronomic reform in general.”<sup>628</sup> The problem is that McCarter never proposes a *redactional* understanding to the problem, except to say that the temple “is unnecessary and unwanted”<sup>629</sup> and that

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the construction of the temple during his reign (1 Chron 22). The *Qere* *לְפָנָיו* refers to Solomon’s feet. We are inclined to read with the *Qere*, as the confusion between *ו* and *ו* is a common scribal error.

<sup>626</sup> To some like McCarter and A. A. Anderson, this would be the first stage in the development in the temple building tradition. The first stage is acceptance of David’s offer. And this is why there is a surviving tradition that David gathered all of the materials necessary for the construction of the temple (1 Chron 22:2–5). Unfortunately, the rest of his reign was marred by sufficient wars to distract him from building the temple.

<sup>627</sup> A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 115.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>629</sup> P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 197.

the Deuteronomist is setting the reader up for Solomon's building efforts in verse 13 (cf. 1 Kgs 5–8). In fact, the deity is affronted by David's grandiose gesture.<sup>630</sup>

McCarter never spells out the cause of the offense, unfortunately. Was it the quality of the gift? Was it the quality of the giver? Was it the fact that David had taken the initiative without having asked YHWH? It seems to us that YHWH was not offended at the offer, and that the text steers clear of giving that impression.

First, YHWH is not offended at the quality of the gift. A cedar temple was lavish gift, indeed. Moreover, YHWH commands the Solomon to construct his temple from cedar (e.g., 1 Kgs 5:8–10; 6:15–20). Nor is he insulted at the giver, as YHWH was displeased with David and sought to insult him. For example, YHWH addresses David as "my servant" (v. 5). Thus, 2 Samuel 7 goes just as far to defend the king as 1 Kings 8:18. And if YHWH was so offended, why make the moment of offense of the incomparable God, the greatest victory of the Davidic house?<sup>631</sup>

Noth, Simons, Gese,<sup>632</sup> and Gordon propose that David's intention, while good on the surface, was presumptuous. Only the deity can propose temple building (e.g., Exod 25:8). YHWH was not affronted, however. Gese states, for example, "'You' is emphasized in the sentence 'You plan to build me a temple' and is not directed at David as a particular figure, but to David as a mortal."<sup>633</sup> Thus, the passage is neither anti-temple nor anti-David. It was only proper for the gods in the ancient Near East to

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<sup>630</sup> Ibid.

<sup>631</sup> The reception of the Sinaitic covenant in Exodus 32 hardly presents a parallel. Not only does YHWH scathingly rebuke Israel for their rebellion, but he tells Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will wipe out of my book" (v. 33). Those who were guilty were punished severely. David is rewarded.

<sup>632</sup> M. Noth, "David and Israel," 251. J. J. Simons, *Jerusalem in the Old Testament; Researches and Theories* (Studia Francisci Scholten Memoriae Dicata 1; Leiden: Brill, 1952), 50. H. Gese, "Der Davidsbund und die Zionserwählung," *ZTK* 61 (1964): 21. R. P. Gordon, 237.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid.

initiate temple building plans. Ishida notes that a king could not undertake the construction of a temple unless he first asked the gods for permission.<sup>634</sup>

While we commend this view as one among many reasons, it also suffers from several difficulties. If the gift or the way it was offered *so clearly* ran counter to divine-human social custom, then why does Nathan initially think the idea is good (v. 3)?<sup>635</sup> Second, in the examples we have of temple rejections, kings initiate the process of temple building by asking the deity. Third, YHWH never explicitly corrects David for his presumptuousness regarding the offer. Fourth, perhaps the least convincing reason is that none of the ancient commentators sought to explain YHWH's refusal in this way.

In any event, we posit three reasons that YHWH rejected David's offer, the first two dealing with David's motives. David has in our view two possible motives. David's first motive was to glorify YHWH (cf. v. 13), but the deity had desired to be honored by his saving acts and faithfulness to David. Secondly, David wanted to cement his hold on the throne further. That is, because the peace that David possessed was tenuous, building a temple was a way to consolidate the unstable power that he had. YHWH's refusal had the implicit purpose of forcing David to trust in the deity's power to secure

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<sup>634</sup> T. Ishida, 85.

<sup>635</sup> Noth and Cross believe that Nathan's response is proper court protocol for speaking to the king. M. Noth, "David and Israel," 257; F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 242. It is difficult to believe, however, that if the idea were cultically inappropriate, Nathan would be so compliant, especially given how YHWH seems to have very little tolerance for inappropriate cultic actions. Also, Nathan was blisteringly confrontational when David had sinned with Bathsheba. With regard to court protocol, Joab seems to have no trouble disagreeing with David, albeit respectfully, when the king intended to conduct a census (2 Sam 24:3). Joab realized how serious the action was (as the reader can tell from the three punishments offered to the king after). Verse 4 gives the impression that Joab persisted but lost his plea. In any event, Ishida believes that Nathan's refusal was due to antagonism between the Jebusite and Judahite YHWHist groups. While Nathan and Zadok led the former group, Abiathar led the latter. The difficulty with this view, as we have mentioned above, is that it is unlikely that Zadok is of Jebusite stock, and the text never gives Nathan's genealogy. T. Ishida, 94–95. We do, however, see tension between the two priests, but it is struggle between the north and south. Cross also supports the tension between the priests. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 242. The narrator, however, is not asking us to read the possible historical-political subtext into the event, but has supplied the messages and the values with which we should judge his history, even if messages are gently couched to preserve the David's honor, while more forcefully ensuring the deity's prestige.

the throne. Thirdly, YHWH's refusal ensured that his gift of an eternal dynasty would be seen as gracious and free,<sup>636</sup> not a result of David's offer. In this way, the main issue of the passage is not the shame of the king, but the greater honor of the deity, which he achieves (ironically) by refusing David's gift.

With regard to the deity's glory, the undercurrent of the interaction between YHWH and David appears to center around this very fact, and David willingly confesses this in his thanksgiving section. First, no matter how glorious a cedar temple might be,<sup>637</sup> YHWH desired his glorious acts to bring him honor.

- V. 2a I am living in a house of cedar (אֲנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּבֵית אֲרָזִים).  
 V. 2b But the ark of God is stays in a curtain<sup>638</sup> (וְאֹרֹן הָאֱלֹהִים יָשֵׁב בְּתוֹךְ תְּרִיעָה).  
 V. 5 Will *you* [David] build me a house to live in? (הֲאַתָּה תִּבְנֶה-לִּי בַיִת לְשֹׁכְתִי).  
 V. 7 Why have you not built me a house of cedar? (לָמָּה לֹא-בִנִיתָם לִי בַיִת אֲרָזִים)

In the first pair, David was unhappy with the construction of the deity's abode, as his was far costlier, and YHWH's "curtain" did not befit the glory of the deity. Thus, as Hiram had honored him, David desired to honor his God. By YHWH's question in verse 5, however, the implication is that David cannot honor him with a temple, no matter how costly. Thus, he had never requested to be honored in that way (v. 7). This point is explicit in 2 Chronicles 2:5: "Who is able to build him a house for the heavens, when/since/because the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who am I that I should build for him a house, except to make offerings before him." Despite the fact that the

<sup>636</sup> As R. P. Gordon states, "The transition from tent-shrine to temple will come, but *in God's time*, and not as a favour from David" (italics his). R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 237.

<sup>637</sup> David evidently intended to use cedar in the construction (7:7). McCarter notes that by the time of the first millennium, most of Byblos had been deforested, making what was a valuable commodity from the fourth millennium BCE, even more precious in the first millennium. P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 145; 201. Also, see the construction materials described in 1 Kings 6:18 and 1 Chronicles 22.

<sup>638</sup> The value (and glory) of a house is seen in the quality of the house's walls. Verse 2 reads תְּרִיעָה "curtain," while verse 6 בְּאֹהֶל וּבִמְשָׁכָן "in a tent, in a tabernacle." Cross retains the latter as evidence of the poetic past of the passage. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 255. McCarter is likely correct that בִּמְשָׁכָן was a gloss (so LXX<sup>L</sup>). Whatever the case, for David, the dwelling place of YHWH was not suitable to his glory.

offer falls short of YHWH's glory, there is no implication that David has been disrespectfully presumptuous, perhaps because David has made the best offer he could have.

In contrast, God's glory is defined by two things: his military exploits—past and future—and his current offer of and faithfulness to the Davidic promises. Both of these elements are implicit in the oracle proper, but comes out more explicitly in the thanksgiving section. YHWH's point is that *he* is the conferrer of glory on both David and himself.

YHWH is great and incomparable<sup>639</sup> (v. 22) because he brought Israel out of Egypt (v. 6) to make a name for himself (v. 23 [LXX]). If YHWH holds his covenant (v. 25), then his name will be magnified for being the God over the people he redeemed and for establishing the Davidic throne (v. 26). Thus, it is God who honored David by raising him up from being a shepherd to sitting in a house (v. 8), and it is God who will honor himself by establishing his word, having conferred sonship on Davidides (v. 14). Thus, David confesses to YHWH, "What can David do for you that you should honor your servant?"<sup>640</sup> Indeed, David could not augment the deity's glory more than the deity's great acts could.

The second reason for the rejection could also lie in the fact that by building the temple, David sought to consolidate the power and honor of his kingdom. At best, the "peace" David possessed (v. 1) was a temporary one, even by generous terms (1 Sam 8,

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<sup>639</sup> "Who is like you?" or "there is no one like you" is a sentiment often associated with military pre-eminence (Exod 15:11; Deut 33:29; Ps 35:10; 71:19).

<sup>640</sup> McCarter seems correct in noting that 2 Samuel 7:20 suffered a homoioteleuton and a later addition of לְדָבָר to clarify the text (cf. 1 Chronicles 17:18). See McCarter, *II Samuel*, 233–34. Citing 7:5, he states, "David can give Yahweh nothing he does not already have." Ibid, 236. Also see R. W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 283.

11; 1 Kgs 5:3).<sup>641</sup> And, despite having deposed the last viable Saulide, still there were those who saw David's grasp on the throne as illegitimate, as Shimei would demonstrate. Thus, David would have been keenly aware of how a temple could have benefitted him.<sup>642</sup> Whitelam has noted:

Cultural anthropology has shown us that the ability of a pre-state polity to evolve from a chiefdom to statehood (and then survive) is largely dependent upon its ability to achieve legitimacy. A common way for a state to maintain control, and thus legitimize itself, is through the use of force. But another method, which is usually less costly and more politically efficient, involves the use of symbolic forms—that is, propaganda.<sup>643</sup>

Thus, a temple would have provided a visible, symbolic form of his legitimized grasp on the throne. Also as Sarna has noted in his discussion on the Tower of Babel, monumental structures (or symbols of might) are signs of human arrogance to YHWH (Ps 44:7; Isa 2:12–15; Is 31:1; 30:25; Jer 5:17; and Ezek 26:4, 9).<sup>644</sup> In the Babel text we find the building of monumental structures and making a name juxtaposed, “Let us build a city with its towers and top in the heavens, so that we might make *a name for ourselves...*” (Gen 11:4). Building a city with a tower and making a name for themselves was linked with the concept of power (being able to accomplish whatever they purposed, v. 6) and

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<sup>641</sup> Among other things, 1 Samuel 8–11 serves the purpose of showing that YHWH is faithful to give David victory over his enemies and rest to his people. The mention in 8:13 that David made a name (יָעַשׂ שֵׁם) hearkens back to the YHWH's promise to (7:9). Chapters 8 and 11, thus, record his various wars with the nations around him that could “humiliate (in defeat)” (עִנְיָה) Israel. It should be noted that in chapters 9–11, David gains honor in two different ways. In chapter 10, he extends mercy to the last of Saul's heirs who submits to David's claim on the throne. Thus, he honors Meriba'al by making him a client (cf. our discussion on 1 Sam 2:1–10). Secondly, David extends grace to the Hanun (an ironic name), which the Ammonite king rejected and shames David's envoys. Having taken a warring posture to David, the Israelite king later defeats a coalition of Aramean and Ammonite force and subjugates all of them (Hi. עֲבָרָה). Thus, YHWH has fulfilled in part 1 Samuel 7:9–11. We will see his fulfillment of verses 14b–15 the Succession Narrative.

<sup>642</sup> A. A. Anderson, 116.

<sup>643</sup> K. W. Whitelam, “The Symbols of Power: Aspects of Royal Propaganda in the United Monarchy,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 49, no. 3 (1986): 166–73.

<sup>644</sup> N. Sarna, 83. It is not our point here that 2 Samuel 7 is in any way alluding to Genesis 11. We are merely noting the similar similarly related elements.

withstanding defeat (not “being scattered,” v. 4), perhaps alluding to some type of exile concept (Deut 4:27; 28:64; Neh 1:8; Jer 13:24; 49:36; Ezek 22:15). So, in light of the rejection of David’s gift of a temple, YHWH promises, “I will make you a name like all of the great ones of the earth” (2 Sam 7:9). David’s name will not come from securing *his own* self-honoring acts (building and conquering) like other kings, but by deity’s fidelity to his covenant. There is a third, similar concern between the texts. The deity’s final promise is to “plant” Israel (v. 10), that is, to keep them from being scattered.<sup>645</sup> What the tower builders sought to accomplish in their actions, YHWH would accomplish for Israel through his promises to David. In light of the fact that the Deuteronomist was shortly to chronicle David’s wars (chs. 8, 11) and internal struggles (Absalom), YHWH would demonstrate that he alone is the eternal legitimizer of David’s throne and that he alone guarantees his people’s security. Thus, after YHWH alone is glorified for securing David’s kingdom—apart from any human symbols of power and glory—the deity can allow a temple to be erected under Solomon.<sup>646</sup>

There is one final reason in the text that YHWH rejected David’s offer. If YHWH accepted David’s gift, then YHWH’s intention to offer the king eternal legitimization would have appeared to be an obligatory act of reciprocity instead of a free act. Note that there is nothing in the passage to indicate that YHWH’s gift is predicated on anything but his free decision. YHWH never says, I will grant you an eternal house

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<sup>645</sup> Normally the concept of “planting” Israel is associated with theme of “bearing fruit,” that is, acting righteous (Isa 5:7; 60:21; Jer 2:21; Ezek 17:23; Lk 20:9); however, planting is also a metaphor for security from exile. In Jeremiah 42:10, “planting” is contrasted with the concept of being “scattered” by the king of Babylon (v. 11). Likewise, “planting” and “scattering” are present in Jeremiah 18:9ff where YHWH builds and plants nations (לְבָנֵה וְלִנְטֵה). If they do evil (vv. 10–15), then he will shame them (v. 16), and scatter them (v. 17). Similarly, in 2 Maccabees 1:27–29, Nehemiah’s prays that the Lord would take his scattered (διασποράν) people and plant (καταφύτευσον) on “the holy place as Moses had promised.”

<sup>646</sup> Again, while there are no doubt historical currents that would have kept David from building the temple (e.g., priestly pressures between Zadok and Abiathar, wars between Israel and the nations, and a war started by his son Absalom), we are merely following the values undergirding the text.

“because of your offer” or “because of your loyalty.” It is a free offer based on his decision, not a duty or act of reciprocity. In fact, David (after being rejected) confesses that the YHWH’s gift is free of obligation: “According to your promise and your decision you made all of this greatness so...” (בְּעִבּוֹר דְּבָרְךָ וּבְלִבְךָ עָשִׂיתָ אֵת כָּל־הַגְּדוּלָּה הַזֹּאת).<sup>647</sup>

David’s praise stands in contrast to the Nathan’s initial statement to David:

“...everything that is in your heart go and do” (כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבְךָ לֵךְ עֲשֵׂה). The same sentiment is also implicit in 7:18, that he and his house did nothing to deserve YHWH’s gift.

In fact, even Israel is YHWH’s people by the deity’s own doing (v. 24). Thus, YHWH’s name will not be magnified (וַיְגַדֵּל שְׁמֶךָ עַד־עוֹלָם) by a temple, but by his faithfulness to make the David’s house enduring and victorious (vv. 23–26). We suggest that the narrator implies that YHWH refuses David, not based on any insult suffered, but because rejecting the offer glorified him the most. The deity would be glorified because of his own military victories, ensuring the permanent legitimization of the Davidic line, and because of his free and gracious offer to David and his people.

#### 4.2.2 Honoring the House of David: YHWH’s counteroffer to build David an eternal House and to allow Solomon to build the deity a House (2 Sam 7:8–17 // 1 Chron 17:7–15).

While we have focused much on honor in the Davidic covenant, a few more words are in order as the focus turns from the king’s offer to build YHWH’s house to YHWH’s offer to build the king’s house. And as we will find, the themes of this and the previous section are echoed in the following account of David’s thanksgiving, which we explore soon. After David’s offer is firmly refused, one could expect a rebuke to follow,

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<sup>647</sup> The statement recalls YHWH’s choice of David, as choosing someone after his own [YHWH’s] heart,” that is, “a man of his [YHWH’s] own choosing.” See R. P. Gordon notes the Akkadian parallel *šarra šá libbišū ina libbi ipteqid* in the Babylonian Chronicles. R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 342, n. 11. Also, YHWH does not establish covenantal relationships or grants divine promises as a reward, even if there exists obligations that maintain that relationship once it is established.



whether a mild (e.g., 1 Kgs 9:12–13) or harsh one (e.g., Mal 1:6–2:2), as often happens when unsuitable gifts are rejected or when the giver is rejected (2 Sam 10:3). Instead the convention of gift giving is turned on its head when YHWH abundantly honors David with an eternal covenant.<sup>648</sup>

Verses 8b–9a comprise the functional equivalent to a historical prologue<sup>649</sup> to YHWH's promises. Though they look ahead to the promises about to come, however, the narrator means for his readers to contrast them with the preceding material. For example, YHWH raised up David from the lowly position of following sheep in a pasture to be prince over the deity's people.<sup>650</sup> YHWH, the tent-dwelling God, has raised David from being a shepherd, that is, from being a tent-dweller (Song 1:8; Isa 13:20; 38:12; Jer 6:3). YHWH not only elevated David, but also cut off all of his enemies (v. 9a; cf. chs. 5–6; 7:1). Such statements reaffirm the relationship between sovereign God and the vassal king, and they lay the foundation for the latter's continued faithfulness and future trust in the sovereign.<sup>651</sup>

The statement that introduces the body of promises to David is honorific, to make David's "name like all of the great ones of the earth" (v. 9 // 1 Chron 17:8). As we have shown in our lexical section, the idea of "making a name" deals chiefly with

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<sup>648</sup> Once again, our view is the passage indicates that YHWH made a covenant with David, as several elements in the passage indicate; however, the narrative lacks some of the formal characteristics of a covenant (e.g., deposition, witnesses, etc.).

<sup>649</sup> P. J. Calderone, 44.

<sup>650</sup> The title "prince" or "ruler" (נָגִיד) is first applied to Saul (1 Sam 9:14; 10:1) and later to David (1 Sam 13:14; 25:30; 2 Sam 6:21), as well as the title מֶלֶךְ (2 Sam 5:2 [Saul]; [David]). The epithet seems more likely to do with Israel's royal ideology, namely that YHWH retained his title as king, and Israel's king was the deity's prince. For example, when Solomon is crowned king in 1 Chronicles 29:22, it states, לְכֹהֵן לְיְהוָה וּלְנָגִיד לְיְהוָה ("They anointed him as YHWH's prince and Zadok as priest").

<sup>651</sup> David's obvious concern would be for the preservation of his throne, and if he is to trust YHWH for the security that the deity will offer, he merely has to be reminded of the victory YHWH has already secured him.

acquired honor, that is, the esteem one receives from their great acts, and often, though not exclusively, in military superiority (cf. Gen 11:4; 12:2; 2 Sam 7:23; 1 Kgs 1:47; Isa 63:12, 14; 1 Macc 3:14; 5:57).<sup>652</sup> The redactor of the history inserted chapter 8 to demonstrate how YHWH gave “success to David everywhere he went” (2 Sam 8:6, 14), and he juxtaposes that with the fact that “David wins a name” (וַיַּעַשׂ דָּוִד שֵׁם) in verse 13. David is depicted as ensuring peace for Israel by defeating and subjugating those who might seek to harm her. He defeats the Philistines (v. 1), Moabites (v. 2), Hadadezer king of Zobah (v. 5),<sup>653</sup> Edomites (v. 12), Ammonites (v. 12, ch. 10), Arameans and Damascenes (8:6; ch. 10 [Arameans]). Many of these people David reduced to vassalage (8:2, 6; 7–8, 14; 10:19). Thus, YHWH in essence gives Israel rest from all of their enemies (7:10–11), an important theme in Deuteronomy (3:20; 12:9–10) and throughout the Deuteronomistic history itself (Josh 1:13, 15; Judg 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28; 1 Sam 7:1; 1 Kgs 5:18). Solomon who erects the temple would claim that the promise of rest is finally fulfilled in his reign (1 Kgs 8:56). David’s many military victories and subjugation of the neighboring peoples to vassalage portray David as having attained superiority in the region.

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<sup>652</sup> Following Hermann and Moretz, Cross and McCarter see “making a name” as a stock Hamito-Semitic concept. McCarter states, “It refers to the establishment of some kind of memorial to keep remembrance of an individual alive in the future...” (cf. Isa 55:13; also see 2 Sam 18:18; Isa 56:5). P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 203. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 248–49. There is concern for progeny in the text, but the theme of progeny is not introduced to carry on David’s name (though every Davidide does). Instead, “name making” is connected to building the temple. The focus of the “name” concept in 2 Samuel 7–8 is the great deeds of the king—building a temple and conquering enemies. Westermann, arguing against Gunkel’s similar memorial building concept in Genesis 11, states that what is in view is “a name won by outstanding deeds,” not the survival of an ordinary name that occurs in the context of the family. C. Westermann, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 548. Westermann later avers, “It is something new and very different when a man makes a name (gains fame) by a deed or series of deeds, e.g., Gilgamesh, II 160, ‘a name that endures—I will set up for myself,’ or David, 2 Sam 8:13...It is the significance of the deeds for the community that gives them recognition and meaning; that is what is meant by the ‘name.’” Ibid. Even David’s erection of the monument in 2 Samuel 8:3 focuses on the extension of his power (ἐπιστήσαι τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ).

<sup>653</sup> A. A. Anderson, 132.

The second promise involves the gift of a “house” (v. 11c). Entailed in that promise is progeny (v. 11c) whose kingdom YHWH will establish or make firm (הִכְיִנֵּהוּ). YHWH will give the honor to him to build the temple (v. 13), and an eternal kingdom (vv. 13, 16). Thus, David receives three honors: fame for the military victories YHWH gives him that leads to peace for the people, an eternal dynasty and the eventual construction of the temple through his son. There is one more honor that David’s line receives, sonship, which we will discuss with in our next section on shame in the Davidic promises, because it is tied to the limitation of the punishment on David’s house.

#### 4.2.2.1 1 Samuel 7:14a: Shame in the Davidic Covenant

Only verse 7:14a, which ironically rests on the honored status of sonship of the Israelite king, could imply the notion of shame: “When he [David’s son] commits iniquity, I will discipline him with a rod of humans and with blows of the sons of men” (אֲשֶׁר בַּהֲשֹׁתוֹ וְהִכָּהוּתוֹ בַּשֶּׁבֶט אֲנָשִׁים וּבְנֵי אָדָם). If Nathan’s Oracle is to be viewed as a covenant, as we support, then this verse is the abbreviated, but functional equivalent to a “stipulations” and “curses” section,<sup>654</sup> though certainly by no means typologically similar to what we find in the Sinai covenant, except that it is apodictically formulated. Though the particular focus of the verse is on Solomon (7:12–13)—he is the only Davidide authorized to build the temple—the promises and discipline and blessing obviously apply to the Davidic house in general.

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<sup>654</sup> Like 2 Samuel 7:14, Gary Knoppers has noted that obligations and curses (i.e., conditionality) are built into the parallel treaty of Tudḥaliya IV with Ulmi-Tešup: “Ulmi-Tešup may not pass to the issue of one of his daughters. The treaty also contains a curse that Ulmi-Tešup along with his wife, family, property, and country will be decimated, should he not fulfill the terms of the treaty.” G. Knoppers, *Royal Treaty*, 683. Eslinger adds, “He [God] might have talked about expanding borders or heaps of gold (1 Kgs 3.12–13), but he chooses to remind that sin bears its consequence...the contrast implicitly allows anything up to but not including the unforgiving removal of Saul. The full measure of obligation remains.” L. Eslinger, *House of God or House of David: The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7* (JSOTSup 164; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 62 (but see 57–63).

That the king can commit iniquity at all implies that the kingship remains under the standards the Israel's law code,<sup>655</sup> as becomes explicit when Ahijah tears away the kingdom from Solomon (1 Kgs 11:11; 2 Kgs 11:12).<sup>656</sup> While our results have implications for the conditionality / un-conditionality debate, our current task is to provide an exploration of the topic of shame as it relates to 1 Samuel 7:14.

Whatever punishments 7:14b allude to, they are to be contrasted with the promise in verse 15: "My loyalty I will not take from him as I took it away from the one who was before you" (וְתִסְדֵּי לֹא־אֶסִּיר מִמֶּנּוּ כִּאֲשֶׁר תִּסְרֹזְתִּי מֵאֲשֶׁר הָיָה לְפָנַיךָ).<sup>657</sup> What is unclear is how much and what types of discipline the king may experience before verse 15a is violated. What seems clear from the oracle (and narrative of Samuel) is that YHWH will *never legitimize* another house to rule over Israel as happened when YHWH delegitimized Saul's house. What will ensure the promise of David's permanent legitimacy is that it is honored with new status, sonship.

The familial language is polyvalent and covenantal in nature. Possibly, it resembles adoption language, as Weinfeld claims, though Knoppers has cast some doubt on such an easy identification.<sup>658</sup> Yet the language is nonetheless stock vocabulary from ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaties as Philip Calderone has shown.<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> Jon Levenson notes that the covenant with David never implies an exemption from Sinaitic stipulations. J. D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 99.

<sup>656</sup> We have already noted above that verse 1, whatever its origin, depicts David as following the Deuteronomic Code with regard to temple building (Deut 12).

<sup>657</sup> The reading יָסֹר is likely a corruption (LXX ἀποστέσω). Based on 1 Chronicles 17:13, we suggest the following development: לֹא אֶסִּיר > לֹא סֹר > יָסֹר. The original form would have been defectively spelled, and the *matres* added latter to both 2 Samuel (י) and 1 Chronicles (י), respectively. For a reconstruction of the second half of the verse, see McCarter's discussion. The MT likely represents a conflate text. We read with Wellhausen, Smith, and McCarter. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 194–95.

<sup>658</sup> M. Weinfeld, "Covenant of Grant," 190. G. Knoppers, "Royal Grants," 681–82.

<sup>659</sup> P. J. Calderone, *Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty Treaty; 2 Samuel 7, 8-16* (Logos 1; Manila: Loyola House of Studies, 1966), 44, 55.

Along with the recitation of YHWH's faithfulness to David in the past (7:8b–9a), the honor of receiving a unique relationship with YHWH and the warning of discipline, would seem to provide the impetus for loyalty (the proverbial stick-and-carrot). Thus, the language can at one time present a dual positive-negative motivation.

Positively, the king has been honored with a special relationship and should be accordingly loyal; however, if he is not, he will be disciplined because of his disloyalty (עוה).<sup>660</sup> The negative repercussions of disobedience are drawn from the cultural milieu of common household discipline as reflected in the wisdom tradition of Proverbs (13:18, 24; 23:13; 29:15). Presumably, YHWH, as the king's father, will discipline the king because of his (covenantal) love<sup>661</sup> to help him live a life of wisdom and honor. Following Weinfeld, McCarter states, "Thus, in the present passage David's heirs must expect to be punished if they do not behave respectfully toward their adoptive parent, but that punishment will not extend beyond the ordinary kinds of discipline administer by a father of disobedient sons...and the sons, however, chastised, will not be alienated."<sup>662</sup> While it captures the familial ethos of verse 14a and the sense of permanency in verse 15, the difficulty with the McCarter's interpretation is that it basically restates the passage. It does not answer more pressing questions: What does it

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<sup>660</sup> While the rare verb עוה literally means, "to twist, pervert," it can be applied more generally to acts of disobedience to YHWH's commandments, which always communicates a sense of rebellion against the deity. In particular, though, Deuteronomistic writers often use it in the context of disloyalty. In 1 Samuel 20:30, when Saul suspects Jonathan's loyalty to David, he claims that Jonathan is a son of a "perverse, rebellious woman" (בֶּן־נָשִׁית הַמַּרְדּוּת). In 2 Samuel 19:19, the עוה is used to describe Shimei's adversarial actions against David when the king was deposed (cf. 19:22). In 1 Kings 8:47, the wickedness that sent Israel into captivity is likely an allusion to idolatry. Lastly, in Jeremiah 3:21, Israel has acted עוה by forgetting their God. Second 2 Samuel 24:17 is perhaps the only outlier, unless on posits that David counted his people to see the size of military force he had, because he did not trust YHWH.

<sup>661</sup> R. E. Murphy notes, "The paradox of the action [of corporeal punishment] is mirrored in the love/hate contrast: a beating is a sign of love, a correction so that a child does not die for lack of wisdom, and so that the child is not shameful and a parent can boast about him to others (Prov 19:18; 23:12–14; Sir 30:1–12). R. E. Murphy, 99.

<sup>662</sup> P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 208.

mean that he will be beaten? What will he be beaten with? How severely? Who will strike him? A. Graeme Auld and Henry Smith think somewhat differently. Smith opines, “The rod of men is such as men use for each other—not such as the divine anger would naturally choose, for that would annihilate the object of the chastisement.”<sup>663</sup> Yet Auld notes, “Punishment of (only?) human proportions is perhaps to be contrasted with punishment on a divine scale; and yet David chooses divine afflictions for his people to suffer after he counts them (2 Sam 23:13–14).”<sup>664</sup> The difficulty with his view, if strictly maintained, is that YHWH in his wrath uses human agents on more than one occasion to discipline the king and his people—and that treatment can be devastating. Jeremiah obviously did make such a divide between the two: “As for you my servant Jacob, do not fear, declares YHWH, for I am with you [and] because I will make an end to all of the nations among whom I banished you. But with you I will not make an end. I will chastise you (יִסְּרֶיךָ) justly, but certainly not leave you unpunished” (46:28). The same could be said of First Isaiah through whom YHWH calls Assyria “rod of my anger” (Isa 10:5). There is no neat division between the human and divine.

Since the Deuteronomist embedded this text in the course of his history and intended for his audience to interpret the kingship through this central text, we will aim to understand the implications of verses 14–15 in two episodes in the Deuteronomistic History. The first episode is David’s sin and punishment in the so-called Succession Narrative (chs. 11–20),<sup>665</sup> and the second incident involves the tearing away of the

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<sup>663</sup> H. P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (ICC 9; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899), 300–301.

<sup>664</sup> A. G. Auld, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 423.

<sup>665</sup> See H. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, 284. We will cite him in full below, but we should note that though the Succession Narrative belongs formally to these chapters, the theme of succession most properly belongs to chapter 7. If the so-called Succession Narrative had nothing to do with 2 Samuel 7, it would seem to be an odd and lengthy parenthesis between the promises of Nathan’s oracle and their

kingdom from Solomon. As we will see, both episodes share some resonance with the previous Saul narratives with one large exception, the Davidic house is never delegitimized. Also, both of these sample events restate the Davidic promises, contain a sin-punishment element<sup>666</sup> and have a forgiveness element that is related to the enduring house of David. More importantly for our purposes, we will demonstrate how the Deuteronomistic editor(s) meant for their audience to understand 2 Samuel 7:14 in terms of shame. This shame will be defined as a king's total or partial loss of power or prestige. We will focus on the second group of events first.<sup>667</sup>

As we have stated, Nathan's Oracle forms a type of theological *Mitte Punkt* for the Deuteronomistic History. Cross has shown that there are two themes that pervade his Dtr<sup>1</sup>. The first motif is summed up by 1 Kings 13:34, "This thing became a sin of Jeroboam's house to demolish (לְהַכְחִיד) and destroy it from the face of the earth."<sup>668</sup> The second opposite theme is summed up by passages like 1 Kings 11:12: "for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."<sup>669</sup> The allusions to the dual concerns of the monarchy and temple in 2 Samuel 7 are clear.

Joining these two themes is 1 Kings 11–12, though we will focus on chapter 11. The account begins by a rehearsal of the idolatrous ways of Solomon (vv. 1–10). Referring to the Sinai restrictions against idolatry, the deity complains to Solomon in

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fulfillment. Nathan's oracle preceding the Succession Narrative and David's Oracle in chapter 24 invites readers to frame the intervening chapters by the promises given to David, especially in light of his sins, divine chastisement and re-instatement.

<sup>666</sup> The Succession Narrative is "framed" by two accounts of the promises given to David (2 Sam 7; 2 Sam 23). The last account is a late addition.

<sup>667</sup> As we will later show, the psalmist who compiled Psalm 89, which focuses on the shame of the king in the lament section, claims that YHWH has indeed, taken his loyalty from David (2 Sam 7:14b).

<sup>668</sup> The reading follows the LXX, Syriac and Vulg. (הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה). F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 279.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid, 281.

verse 11a, “You have not kept my covenant and my statutes which I commanded you,” and as a punishment continues, “I will surely tear the kingdom (אֶת־הַמְּמִלְכָּה אֶקְרַע אֶקְרַע) from you to give to your servant (לְעַבְדִּי).”<sup>670</sup> Later, Ahijah takes Jeroboam’s new cloak<sup>671</sup> and tears it, giving the new king ten pieces to symbolize the number of tribes in his new kingdom, while allowing Solomon to retain one. The theme of “tearing” is the *central* metaphor of the text (vv. 11–13, 30–31; cf. 1 Kgs 14:8), and it symbolically recalls the tearing of Samuel’s robe as a prophetic demonstration of giving Saul’s kingdom to David (1 Sam 15:27–28; cf. 1 Kgs 11:29–31). We believe that, though the two prophetic acts contain many similarities, they are ultimately symbolically dissimilar acts, as we intend to show. In any case, both episodes share the parallel of removing and giving of the incumbent’s kingdom to one of the king’s most honored servants (1 Sam 22:14; 1 Kgs 11:28). A comparison of the two episodes is necessary to understand the symbolism and how it relates to shame in 1 Kings 11.

Garments are used as symbols of favored status or high position (e.g., Gen 37:3; Est 6:9),<sup>672</sup> and the grasping of the hem of superior’s garment is a sign of submission to

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<sup>670</sup> Most likely “covenant and statutes” refers to the Deuteronomistic Code and the statutes contained therein (2 Kgs 17:15; 2 Kgs 23:3). Thus, from the Deuteronomistic point of view, the king is never depicted anywhere in the Deuteronomistic literature as exempt from the obligations of the Deuteronomistic Code. Thus, sonship in the context of the Nathan Oracle entails Deuteronomistic obedience. It might be noted that though there were obviously anti-monarchic positions in Israel for theological reasons (e.g., Samuel), one should not conclude that the king’s obligations to Deuteronomistic Code are not inherently anti-monarchic, unless Israel’s obligations to the same covenant are inherently anti-Israelite in sentiment.

<sup>671</sup> The MT is somewhat unclear about who was wearing the new cloak. The LXX clarifies that it was Ahijah the prophet. Cogan argues, based on Genesis 39:12 that Ahijah took Jeroboam’s cloak. M. Cogan. *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 339.

<sup>672</sup> Douglas Edwards states, “dress provides important social and cultural information concerning status, power, group identity, manufacture, and trade.” *ABD*, 2:232. He goes on to say, “In general, the tearing or removal of one’s garments publicly displayed despair (Gen 37:29), mourning (2 Sam 1:11–12), or loss of status (Num 20:26)...Shame, humiliation, powerlessness, or outrage result when one is stripped of one’s dress.” *Ibid*, 233.



the superior.<sup>673</sup> Thus, the garment in 1 Samuel 15 appears to symbolize YHWH's royal robes. Cogan suggests (based on Mesopotamian traditions) that the edge or the hem was a "'symbolic extension of one's personality' and consequently applied as a legally binding 'signature' to clay documents as a pledge. It also conveys the sense of submission in supplication to a superior."<sup>674</sup> For example, Ili-Ištar, a vassal of Zimiri-Lim to his sovereign, "I am like your servant and never shall my mayor let go the hem of the garment of my father. I am a faithful son of this country."<sup>675</sup> But YHWH rejects Saul's attempt at humility when the hem of Samuel's robe tears (15:26).<sup>676</sup> The tearing of the cloak, however, is symbolically difficult.

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<sup>673</sup> McCarter notes that Brauner has shown in Old Aramaic that *ḥz bkn*, the Akkadian *sissikta šabātu*, and the Hebrew *heḥēzīq bakkānāp* suggest submission. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 268. For example, see the Aramaic Panamuwa Inscription): "On account of his wisdom and because of his loyalty, he then seized onto the skirt (robe) of his lord, the mighty king of Assyria." "The Panamuwa Inscription," translated by K. L. Younger, Jr., *COS* 2.37:158–159. Or disloyalty is expressed by letting go of one king's garment and grasping another king's garment. "Land Grant At 456\*," translated by Richard Hess (*COS* 2.137:369–370 [lines 47–48]).

<sup>674</sup> M. Cogan, 340. Also Cogan, following Ferris Stephens, believes that both accounts presuppose a concept of imitative magic, a prophetic act that brings about the message. Cogan, 340. See F. J. Stephens, "The Ancient Significance of *šīyīt*," *JBL* 50, no. 2 (1931): 59–70. See Brauner who denies the connection to magic. R. A. Brauner, 36–37, n. 9. Cogan's suggestion is interesting, though he never offers proof linking the Israelite conception of garments with the Mesopotamian one. Perhaps this idea is behind 2 Kings 2:8. Also, if such a concept existed and persisted in the first century Palestine, perhaps we find an anti-magical (apologetic) text in the New Testament in Matthew 9:21–22 (cf. Luke 8:43–48). A hemorrhaging woman thinks: "If I can just touch his cloak I will be saved (healed)." Jesus says to her after she touches the hem (κράσπεδον) of his garment and is healed, "Your faith has healed you." In Luke's account, after the woman touches Jesus's garment, "I noticed that power had gone out from me." But Jesus reiterates that it is her faith that has healed her. Thus, both texts, by locating the healing in the woman's faith, rejects the extension of the idea of a prophet's "magic" working *ex opere operato* through the touching of the Messiah's garment.

<sup>675</sup> In F. C. Fesham, "Father and Son—Treaty and Covenant," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971): 124. He cites G. Dossin, "Une mention de Hattusa dans une lettre de Mari," *RHA* 5 (1939): 72.

<sup>676</sup> The grammar in the MT, LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate is does not clarify whose robe Saul grasped, his own or Samuel's. Brauner, citing Akkadian and Aramaic parallels, concludes that it is Samuel's cloak which Saul grasps and tears. R. A. Brauner, "'To Grasp the Hem' and 1 Samuel 15:27," *JANESCU* 6 (1974): 38.

Fensham notes with regard to the Zimri-lim example, that “it is thus obvious that Father-Son is used in this text as treaty terminology in a treaty back-ground.”<sup>677</sup> And commenting on Land Grant AT 456, Hess notes: “The act of grasping the hem here implies some sense of loyalty to the sovereign. See Saul’s tearing of Samuel’s hem (1 Sam 15:27–28) where the prophet represents God and the divine blessing of rulership which has been taken away from Saul.”<sup>678</sup> In Israelite royal ideology, father-son language is portrayed as special to the Davidides and as the basis for their eternal covenant (2 Sam 7:14–15), something that YHWH explicitly withholds from Saul. Such acts, however, in the Bible and ancient literature are not confined to covenantal relationships, but any superior inferior relationship. Thus, one must be careful when drawing parallels. Zechariah 8:23 is perhaps helpful. In Zechariah, grasping the hem can be viewed as a sign “supplication, importuning, submission to a superior,”<sup>679</sup> without covenantal implications.<sup>680</sup> It is implied in 1 Samuel 28 that YHWH would give his hem to Saul’s neighbor who is more worthy than he is (וְהָתַנְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ הַטּוֹב מִמֶּנִּי).

Thus, Saul is declared unworthy and his shame is evident. Saul had never achieved a promise like 2 Samuel 14b–15 (// 1 Sam 13:13). In 1 Samuel 15:30, Saul, realizing the *permanent delegitimization* of his house and the shame it entails, importunes

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<sup>677</sup> F. C. Fensham, “Father and Son,” 124.

<sup>678</sup> COS 2.137, n. 4.

<sup>679</sup> R. A. Brauner, 37.

<sup>680</sup> The same could not be said for David. When David cuts the corner of Saul’s cloak off in 1 Samuel 24:5, it is a signal that he is breaking a covenant with Saul, a rather violent action. Because the hem of Saul’s royal garment represents Saul himself, David’s grief is justified for “raising [his] hand against YHWH’s anointed” (v. 6). Because his action is a drastic one, David must restrain his men from hurting Saul (v. 7). In doing this, David turns what is a clear act of revolt into an opportunity to prove his submission to the king through acts and words of obeisance (vv. 11–15), highlighting that if he had wanted to kill the king, David could have easily done so (1 Sam 24:10).

Samuel *to honor* Saul at that very moment before the prominent men of the people, the elders (פְּבָרֵי נָא נָגֵד זְקֵנֵי-עַמִּי). Samuel does so, but Saul's house has lost his high position.

In 1 Kings 11, however, we have no have talk of hems, supplication and submission. In fact, Solomon has been disloyal to YHWH. The garment appears to symbolize the tearing of Solomon's royal robes, that is, he is losing his divine legitimization to rule all but one tribe. This being the case, it is possible that the act is multivalent. As we noted in our lexical chapter and in our note above, the tearing of one's own garments is an act of humility, but having one's clothes torn implies an act of shaming by rendering one ritually naked. We note that in 1 Kings 11:30, the prophet never strips Jeroboam of his garment (assuming Cogan is right) before he tears it. The text just says he seized the garment [Jeroboam] was wearing and tore it. The act seemingly represents making an individual naked, which is shaming (Isa 20:4), and the additional shame of being stripped of the symbols of power is all the more diminishing (Isa 45:1; Ezek 26:16). Also, if our suggestion is correct, Jeroboam is given ten pieces of Solomon's robe which ritually invests him with his master's power, leaving Solomon ritually naked, or nearly so. Thus, Solomon is diminished in power and prestige. We believe, then, that Moses's stripping (שָׁרַף) of Aaron in Numbers 20:26–28 provides a better parallel, despite the fact that there is no "tearing." The only reason that the garment is torn in 1 Kings 11 is to allow Solomon to retain one piece. In Numbers, Eleazar is invested with *all* of Aaron's status and thus receives Aaron's garment *in toto*. In any event, what is important to note is that Solomon is given one tribe to rule because of the promise in 2 Samuel 14a–15 (1 Kings 11:11–13). That is to say, David's house is never delegitimized for its sins against its central tenant of the Deuteronomic code.

This conclusion is echoed in 1 Kings 11:38–39, where we find shame language attached to the promise-discipline complex of 2 Samuel 7. For example, in verse 38 we find a recitation of the promise aspect of Nathan’s Oracle: YHWH promises to build Jeroboam an enduring house (בֵּית נִצָּחֵן) like the one the deity had built for David, should Jeroboam keep YHWH’s statues and commandments. That 38bβ–39 is missing from the LXX, likely indicates its secondary nature.<sup>681</sup> What is important to note, though, is that later interpreters connected chastisement in 2 Samuel 7:14 with shame, for David’s descendants will be humbled (וַיִּשְׁתַּבֵּשׁ אֶת-יָרֵךְ דָּוִד),<sup>682</sup> though not permanently (cf. Deut 8:16).<sup>683</sup> According to *TLOT*, the root idea of עָנָה means, “to be bowed down, oppressed,” and the piel form to mean “to bring low, humble.”<sup>684</sup> Thus, the narrator of 1 Kings 11

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<sup>681</sup> Possibly the end of verse 38bβ–39 dropped out of the LXX. The placement of לְמַעַן זֶה is odd, especially for an original, editorial addition. One would have expected it at the beginning of verse 40. Possibly the plus suffered a corruption, signifying that verse 39 is a reconstruction of a damaged addition.

<sup>682</sup> Cogan notes that the ideas and even wording contained in the passage are by no means secondary. Nathan’s promise is contained in verse 38a–bα as they are in verse 39 (cf. 2 Sam 7:14–15). In addition, יָרֵךְ reflects the wording of 2 Samuel 7:12. M. Cogan, 324. He also renders עָנָה as “humble.” Possibly 2 Kings 17:20 provided the basis for the plus that we find in 1 Kings 11:30. Not only does 2 Kings 17:20 contain similar wording, but 2 Kings 17:21 references the passage at hand. The insertion in 1 Kings 11, would function to form a type of inclusio with regard to the birth and death of the northern nation with the “birth statement” carrying with it an allusion to the “death statement.” Despite the possibility of having an eternal kingdom (11:38), David’s עָנָה would not last forever (v. 39), implying the future death of Jeroboam’s nation (17:21). Conversely, the northern nation in 2 Kings 17 has been “rejected,” the same language as used of Saul (1 Sam 15:26; 16:1).

<sup>683</sup> This is the second statement in the Deuteronomistic History that points to an eternal promise coming to an end. The first is found in the judgment oracle to Eli in 1 Samuel 2:30, whose ancestral house is promised the honored position of serving before YHWH forever (בֵּיתָךְ וּבֵית אֲבִיךָ יִתְהַלְכוּ לִפְנֵי עַד-עוֹלָם). Interestingly, YHWH promises that if Jeroboam is faithful to YHWH, the deity will “build [him] an eternal house like the one [he] built David: וּבְנִיתִי לְךָ בֵּית-נִצָּחֵן כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּנִיתִי לְדָוִד “I will build for you a firm house just like I built for David” (1 Kgs 11:38). The limit to that promise of an “enduring house” will be the conflicting (and surer) promise to David (v. 39). Thus, while divine promises can be framed with the language of eternity, disobedience or prior promises/covenants can limit their actuality.

<sup>684</sup> The root occurs in all stems. In the piel, the stem often means “to humble, treat harshly” and most often translated by ταπεινῶ in the LXX. Often these two understandings intersect. Sexual humiliation (rape) shames its victims (Lam 5:10 [see vv. 8–16]; Gen 34:2 [cf. v. 7]). With respect to servants and master, masters will “humble” their servant when feeling threatened, socially or otherwise. When Hagar treats Sarah as insignificant (קָלָל), Sarah uses her power to “subjugate” (עָנָה) Hagar (Gen 16:5–6). Fearing the Israelites superior numerous and powerful, the Egyptians “subjugate” (עָנָה) Israel (Exod 1:9–11). The term can be used economically “to impoverish, economically oppress” (Exod 22:21–23). Ritual cultic acts are seen as acts of subservience to the deity (Lev 16:29, 31). In the qal, it can be used in the

does not merely understand 2 Samuel 7:14 under the general father-child rubric in the household, but as discipline that involves the shaming of a disobedient vassal, which could involve a *near total* loss of power or, as we will suggest, a temporary loss of honor in our second example.

There is a second way in which the discipline of 7:14b implies shame, which is the discipline David receives in the Succession Narrative for his adulterous and murderous ways (both condemned by Sinaitic regulations). Hertzberg notes that “Chapter 7 is the climax of the whole Davidic tradition. At the same time it introduces the account of the succession, which contains evidence of many sins and failings. The prefixing of this account of the promise of the lasting dynasty implies that despite everything God still means to build up the house of David.”<sup>685</sup> Interestingly in 2 Samuel 11, David is portrayed like Saul when he sought to kill David, though David’s

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sense “to be made low.” In Isaiah 25:5, the (victory) song of the ruthless is “humbled” or “silenced” (רָעַנָה). For example, it is used, of a lion that will not “crouch [in submission]” to those who try to intimidate it (Isa 31:4). The enthronement of God is contrasted with the “humbled” states of those who do not fear YHWH (Psa 55:19). Most fitting for 1 Kings 11 is Psalm 119:67 where the psalmist thanks YHWH for “humbling” him, so that he now keeps the deity’s word (cf. v. 71 [pu.]). The two example of the hiphil (1 Kgs 8:35 // 2 Chr 6:26), while divine punishments, are also forms of covenantal shaming, according to our study of the Deuteronomy 28. The niphal is used to mean “to humble oneself” (Exod 10:3). If the verb in 2 Samuel 22:36 is עָנָה II, the passage could be rendered, “your humbling has made me great.” Even in cases of affliction, it is possible to see the notion of “humiliation.” The “affliction” of YHWH’s servant in Isaiah 53:7 involves forms of public humiliation. Of the four instances of the pual, occurs in Psalm 132, which is chiefly concerned with the Davidic covenant. If verse 1 relates to what follows, then the phrase “all of his hardships” כָּל-עֲנֻוָּתָיו seems more akin to “how much effort he went through” (so Allen) to find a place for the temple (cf. 1 Chron 22:14). L. Allen, *Psalms 101-150* (WBC 21; Waco, TX: Word Books Publishers, 1983), 200. The LXX understand translates עָנָה with ταπεινῶ (cf. Syr.). Keil, Johnson, Wellhausen and Perles support our view. K. F. Keil, *Commentary on the Books of Kings* (Trans., J. Murphy; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1857), 201. A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (2nd ed.; Cardiff: Wales U.P., 1967), 20, n. 1. F. Perles, *Analekten zur Textkritik des Alten Testaments* (Munich: Theodor Ackermann, 1895), 65; J. Wellhausen, *Skizzen Und Vorarbeiten. Heft 6* (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1985), 185. D. R. Hillers notes that Castilione agrees with our assessment. G. R. Castellino. *Libro Dei Salmi La Sacra Bibbia*. Torino: Marietti, 1955), 562. Hillers however, supports the concept of royal piety, based on ANE parallels (e.g., KAI 202:2). See D. R. Hillers “Ritual procession of the Ark and Ps 132,” *CBQ* 30, no. 1 (1968): 53. *TLOT* understands עָנָה in the same text as “lowly/humble/ submissive.” In our view, the *concept* in Psalm 132:1 is not so distant from the honorable Uriah who went to great lengths in his self-abnegation when he refused to sleep in his house with his wife because his troops were sleeping the fields.

<sup>685</sup> H. W. Hertzberg, 284. Also R. P. Gordon states, “As 2 Samuel proceeds to show David himself knew as much of the disciplinary hand of Yahweh as did any of his successors.” R. P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 240.

stratagem is more extensive. David, after hearing the news that Bathsheba is married, uses acts of honor to cover up his misdeeds. He invites Uriah to his house and honors him with a present (מִשְׁאַתַּת הַמֶּלֶךְ). David's strategy does not work, because Uriah quite humbly sleeps with the servants outside the house because the ark and his men are in the fields (v. 9; cf. 1 Sam 21:4). In fact, he vows not to return to his house. David, realizing Uriah's character, hatches a plan to get him drunk so that he might break his vow (v. 10). Even drunk, the honorable Uriah refuses to enter his house (v. 13). Realizing his plan has failed, David honors Uriah once more by asking Joab to place him in the thick of the battle, where the valiant warriors (אֲנָשֵׁי-חַיִל) fight (v. 16). The scheme works, and later, Nathan tells David, in 1 Samuel 12:9, "You have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites" (וְאַתָּה הָרַגְתָּ בְּחֶרֶב בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן). The story, of course, recalls Saul's stratagem in 1 Samuel 18 when he offered his daughter Michael to David. Saul set the bride price at one hundred Philistine foreskins, hoping that the Philistines would kill David (1 Sam 18:21–25).

The punishment on David's house parallels the diminishment of Saul's house in a number of ways: (1) four princes of both houses are killed (2 Sam 12:14–19; 13:28; 18:14; 1 Kgs 2:24–25 // 1 Sam 31; 2 Sam 4:7–8); (2) the wives/concubines go to his usurper (2 Sam 12:8 // 2 Sam 16:22); and (3) in their defeat, both are mocked by their enemies (2 Sam 1:20 // 2 Sam 16:5–14); (4) all but two princes who could inherit their respective kingdoms are killed (Meriba'al/Ishbaal and Adonijah/Solomon). The difference between the two kings is that Saul is killed with his sons (1 Sam 31), while David lives to watch his three sons perish and suffer exile himself (17:24–29). This difference is significant because Saul's death is a degrading end to the reign of his house; David's punishment of exile would not end in delegitimization.

Moreover, in our discussion of the Deuteronomic curses, we have connected the *types* of curses David and Saul experienced as a form of shame (diminishing). The decimation of the household (Deut 28:18, 20, 26); the loss of high estate (v. 44); the giving of wives to another (v. 30); the loss of military superiority (v. 25); exile (vv. 26, 36 [only David here]); and being an object of taunting (v. 37). If we included the late material in 2 Samuel 24, we could add plague to that list (vv. 21, 22, 59–60). Thus, the types of shame that David experiences are not different in type than we have seen in the Deuteronomic curses.

From both of our examples, we have established at least a few things. First, the kings of David's house can suffer the same *types* of sanctions that we see in the covenantal curses. Second, Saul suffered these same types of punishments. Third, the punishments are all connected with shame in the sense of diminishing the status and position of the ruler's house. So, while shame is not explicitly evident in 14b–15, it is clear from the way the Deuteronomist incorporates the passage into his narrative that extreme forms of shaming David's house are in view. What is clear is that in all of these judgments, *the house of David never suffers delegitimization like Saul's house*. Thus, YHWH has confirmed in can always be seen as faithful to 14b–15.<sup>686</sup>

#### 4.2.2.2 An Eternal Throne in YHWH's Kingdom (2 Sam 7:16–17 // 1 Chron 17:13–14).

The witnesses to the original form of the end of the oracle differ in small and significant ways.

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<sup>686</sup> Even in David's exile, Absalom sat on the throne. So, it is difficult to know what implications our results have for the Babylonian exile, when no Davidide sat on the throne. We can note, however, that even in the exile, the Davidic dynasty was never thought of as *delegitimized* (Jer 23:5; 30:9). And there was a forward-looking prophecy that David would never lack a scion on the throne is a future promise in Jeremiah (33:15, 21). It must be noted that many scholars consider 1 Kings 8:25 an exilic construction.

## 2 Sam 7:16

MT: Your royal house will be made firm (נָאֲמִן) forever (עַד־עוֹלָם). Before you, your throne will be established forever (נִבּוֹן עַד־עוֹלָם).

LXX: And his house and his kingdom will be established forever before me. And his throne will be set up forever.

## 1 Chron 17:14

MT: In my royal kingdom house, I will make it [his house] stand (עָמַד) forever (עַד־עוֹלָם), and his throne will be established forever (נִבּוֹן עַד־עוֹלָם).

LXX: And I will establish him in my house and in his kingdom forever; and his throne shall be set up forever.

The oracle in 1 Chronicles 17 emphasizes the kingship of YHWH, and perhaps by implication the prince-ship of Israel's king. In contrast, the MT version of 2 Samuel 7:16, refers directly to David and his entire dynasty, where the LXX version of the same text continues the third person reference to Solomon. At first glance, though, having a "firm throne" that is "established forever," appears to run counter our suggestion that the throne can suffer interruption (e.g., exile) without delegitimization. While the language, taken absolutely and literally, is a difficulty for our view, we also note the exact same language in 7:24: "And you established (בָּן) your people Israel for yourself to be your people forever (עַד־עוֹלָם); and you, O LORD, became their God." Despite such "absolute" language, Israel's position in the land before YHWH was contingent on their obedience to the covenant (Deut 4:26–27; 16:3; 20:1; 26:2; 28:64; 32:26). Exile from the land would not be permanent, however (e.g., Jer 29:14).

### 4.2.3 David's Response thanks YHWH's for honoring him with an eternal house: (2 Samuel 7:18–29 // 1 Chron 17:16–27)<sup>687</sup>

Our goal in this section is to give a brief overview of honor as it is variously presented in David's praise/thanksgiving of YHWH and to tie these elements to the

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<sup>687</sup> The section is normally considered a literary unity, even by those who see the chapter as patchwork of traditions with Deuteronomistic additions. For example, see M. Noth who follows Rost. M. Noth, *Laws in the Pentateuch*, 252.



main themes of Nathan's Oracle. In sum, the main thrust of the section is that through YHWH's *free* act of giving David an eternal house, YHWH will ensure that his name will be magnified.

After David's offer, YHWH's rejection, and YHWH's counter offer, come David's effusive praise and thanksgiving. This final section can be further broken up into three parts: humble thanksgiving for YHWH's promise of an eternal dynasty (2 Sam 7:18–21); praise for YHWH's character and deeds which won him a name (vv. 22–24);<sup>688</sup> and petition for YHWH to confirm his promise of an eternal dynasty for his name's sake (vv. 25–29). In short, David calls on YHWH who has in ages past won a name by his great acts and character to do so in the future to ensure his promises.

David's thanksgiving in 2 Samuel 7:18–29 recapitulates the main themes of the first part of the chapter: the prophetic word of promise (v. 8 ff.// vv. 21, 29),<sup>689</sup> the concept of an eternal house of David (vv. 13, 16 // vv. 24–26, 29), the deliverance of Israel (v. 6 // v. 23 [4QSam<sup>a</sup>; LXX λαοῦ σου, οὗ ἐλυτρώσω σεαυτῷ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου), the freedom of YHWH's gift (vv. 5, 11 // v. 20),<sup>690</sup> and the concern for YHWH's name (v. 13a // vv. 23, 26). There are two notable exceptions. There is no mention of the king's discipline, which would not have been fitting in the context of praise and thanksgiving. But what is conspicuous by its absence is any mention of YHWH's house, which Solomon can build.<sup>691</sup> Instead the narrative focuses YHWH's character and David's

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<sup>688</sup> There is the recapitulation of the theme of *past* deliverance from Egypt (v. 6 // v. 23) an oblique reference to the period of Joshua–Judges (v. 7 // v. 23).

<sup>689</sup> The nominal and verbal forms of דָּבַר dominate the passage (14 times in 9 verses [2 Sam 7:4, 7, 17, 19–21, 25, 28–29]). The vast majority of instances occur in praise and thanksgiving section of chapter 7.

<sup>690</sup> As McCarter notes, "...Yahweh's decision to glorify David is free, unmotivated act of divine favor." K. P. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 236.

<sup>691</sup> The absence of any reference to the temple is striking. First, the temple was a major focus of the first two parts of the chapter. In fact, it forms the dual emphasis of YHWH's versus the David's house. Secondly, as we will see, there is no reference to the temple in Psalm 89, unlike Psalm 132. It is impossible

house. In any event, the section is replete with multiple expressions of David's humility and YHWH's incomparable glory.

David's thanksgiving is aptly humble, which helps to underscore the deity's magnanimous, free gesture further. His humility before YHWH is displayed in his posture and word. For example, David sits in prayer before YHWH (v. 18), a position of humility (Jdg 21:2; Neh 1:4),<sup>692</sup> and he opens his address with the self-effacing expression "Who am I? What is my house?" The former statement recalls David's reaction when Saul honored him with the gift of his daughter (1 Sam 18:18; cf. 1 Chron 29:14; 2 Chron 2:6), while the others are found on the lips of Gideon and Saul when YHWH chooses them to lead his people (Jdg 6:15; 1 Sam 9:21). He emphasizes that even such a magnanimous gift (עֲשִׂיתָ אֵת כָּל־הַגְּדוּלָּה) is trifling (וְנִתְקַטֵּן עוֹד זֹאת בְּעֵינַיִךְ) for God (vv. 21, 19). Finally, David addresses himself as "your servant" (עַבְדְּךָ) eight times throughout, and refers to YHWH by the honorific epithet "Lord YHWH" (אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה) seven times. By minimizing himself, David's gestures serve to heighten the honor of his generous divine benefactor.<sup>693</sup>

The middle section (vv. 22–24) is more akin to hymnic literature where David praises YHWH for his greatness (v. 22), incomparability among the gods (vv. 22, 23b; cf. 1 Sam 2:2) and for having won a great name when he defeated the nations and their

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to know what to make of this omission in the current context. Possibly its absence can lend weight to the idea that the promise to Solomon is a secondary development of the promises. Or, as we suspect, it might also be that David is praising YHWH for securing his throne, exactly what he was attempting to do by erecting the temple in the first place.

<sup>692</sup> The editor/author draws together the themes of sitting/house/tent with the opening of David's thanksgiving to move from honor to humility. In verse 1, David is "sitting" (יָשָׁב) honored in his house of cedar (v. 1). He intends to honor the deity who is יָשָׁב a tent, by building him a house of cedar to יָשָׁב in (v. 2, 5). But after YHWH refuses to accept honor in that from David and rewards him with an eternal dynasty, David now honors YHWH by "sitting (יָשָׁב) before YHWH" (evidently in YHWH's tent). Thus, David's initial sitting has gone from a position of honor in his cedar house to humility in YHWH's tent.

<sup>693</sup> A. A. Anderson, 126.

gods on behalf of his people (v. 23). What heightens the glory of David and Israel is that they are unique among the nations of the world. Ancient Near Eastern kings might have a number of vassal nations, but YHWH has but one people.<sup>694</sup>

In the final section, David is humble yet again. He can only petition YHWH based on the deity's promise (v. 27). And David emphasizes that if YHWH is loyal to his promises to give David an eternal throne (v. 25), YHWH's name will be magnified forever (v. 26).

#### 4.3 Honor and shame and the Davidic Covenant in Psalm 89

While a more thorough analysis of how Nathan's Oracle is presented in the prophets as a whole or various psalms (2 Sam 23; Psalm 132) is needed, we will have to content ourselves for space reasons with one such example. Thus, the current purpose in this section is more modest, to understand how the themes of honor or shame are refracted in the later Israelite community that received Psalm 89.<sup>695</sup> Such a study can be taken a piece of what is surely a more complex approach to the Davidic promises by later Israelites (the tensions between Psalm 132 and Psalm 89 are self-evident). In addition, it is not our task to pay attention to large issues of ancient Near Eastern influence on the Psalm (e.g., mythological aspects of Psalm 89).<sup>696</sup> Our main goals are to

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<sup>694</sup> While certain prophets like Amos or Jonah recognized YHWH's care for other nations (e.g. Amos 9:7; Jonah 4:9–11), Amos, for example understood YHWH concern for Israel to be special (Amos 3:2).

<sup>695</sup> We will see that, though the verbal parallels between Psalm 89 and 2 Samuel 7 (cf. 1 Chronicles 17) are not tightly drawn, the two covenants are conceived similarly. That Psalm 89 draws from 2 Samuel 7, however, instead 1 Chronicles can be seen (in part) from the fact that the Chronicler omits the discipline clause in verse 13, while both Psalm 89 and 2 Samuel retain it.

<sup>696</sup> Many of the themes of Psalm 89 are heavily influenced by concepts from the ancient Near East. For example, Kraus notes the Canaanite background behind cosmic associations with "firmness" of the heavens in verse 1–4 (שָׁמַיִם תִּכְן אֱמִינֶתָּהּ בָּהֶם; cf. Psalm 72:5, 7, 17; 119:89). Also verses 9–14 are richly influenced by the concept of the "chaos battle" that we find in works like *Enûma eliš*. Unfortunately, such analysis is beyond the scope of our current focus.

look at the way in which honor is portrayed and especially how shame becomes a dramatic part of the psalmist's presentation. Our discussion will follow the final form of the psalm, a decision which we will soon discuss. The final form contains three sections: a Hymn to YHWH, an expansive rehearsal of the (unfulfilled) promises to David and a lament of the current shame of the monarchy.

#### 4.3.1 The *Sitz im Leben*, Unity and Structure of Psalm 89

While form and literary critics have tended to vary widely about the formation, provenance and *Sitz im Leben* of various parts of the Psalm, they have all tended to agree on two things: (1) the poem is not a unity, and (2) the state in which it now appears is post-586 BCE.<sup>697</sup> With regard to the issue of unity, Kraus states, "In more recent times the tendency is more and more toward considering the whole psalm a large-scale composition in which of course various opinions about individual parts to be enucleated, their extent, and their origin have been delivered."<sup>698</sup>

The dating of the whole piece, of course, relies on the third section of the song (vv. 39–52).<sup>699</sup> For example, Bernhard Duhm believed that the poem was divided into vv. 2–19 and vv. 20–52, with the Davidic material stemming from the Maccabean period and the first section not too much earlier.<sup>700</sup> Hermann Gunkel, divided it into two parts with an addendum: a hymn (vv. 1, 2, 5–18), the prophecy about David (vv. 3, 4, 19–37),

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<sup>697</sup> Some scholars, irrespective of when they date the final form of the psalm, are inclined to view the Davidic material as early. For example, W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1955), 237. Kraus dates the psalm to the pre-exilic period, but has a similar view. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 203.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>699</sup> Kraus states, "Verses 1ff. have been performed by a single singer; that is clearly shown in v. 1. Verses 19ff., as a citation of a basic oracle of God, cannot be assigned precisely. But the prayer song (vv. 38ff.) an individual singer again appears, who laments about the decline of the kingdom of David." Ibid, 202.

<sup>700</sup> B. Duhm, *Die Psalmen* (KHC 14; Freiburg I.B.: Mohr, 1899), 224.

and the addendum (vv. 38–53).<sup>701</sup> Other scholars like H. Schmidt,<sup>702</sup> W. O. E. Oesterley hold similar viewpoints, but differ in detail. Oesterley, for example, believes that since the lament section with its reference of cutting “short the days of [the king’s] youth” (89:46) refers to 2 Kings 24:8, the last lament section belongs to 597 BCE. The final redaction is to be located sometime in the post-exilic period.<sup>703</sup>

Lipiński, takes a different tact. Using the DSS fragments that contain verses 19–22 (4Q98) and 25–27 (4Q87), he argues that 89:1–4 and 19–37 are original, while the other sections accrued later in time. Lipiński believes the Davidic section belongs to the ancient king ideology and dates the psalm to the time of Rehoboam.<sup>704</sup> Kraus, following Albright, believes that verses 6–15 may be dated to the period of the monarchy. He believes, however, that *terminus a quo* for the final form of the psalm belongs to King Josiah’s death, and the *terminus ad quem* would be probably be in the exile.<sup>705</sup> Though Mowinckel believes that the author of Psalm 89 included fragments of an older hymn (vv. 2–4, 6–19) and comments, “hypotheses of any sort that deal with expansions or interpolations do not satisfy. For so far as contents go, the psalm is in spite of everything uniform and well balanced.”<sup>706</sup> And Psalm 89, like all royal psalms dates to the period of the monarchy.<sup>707</sup> As we can see, most scholars see the psalm coming from

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<sup>701</sup> H. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 95.

<sup>702</sup> W. H. Schmidt. *Alttestamentlicher Glaube in Seiner Geschichte*. (Vol. Bd. 6. 4., überarbeitete Aufl. ed. Neukirchener Studienbücher ; Bd. 6. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 180ff.

<sup>703</sup> W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms*, 237.

<sup>704</sup> E. Lipiński, *Le poème royal du Psaume LXXXIX*. 1–5, 20–38 (CahRB 6. Paris: J. Gabalda, 1967), 27–31.

<sup>705</sup> H.-J. Kraus, *Psalm 60–150*, 203.

<sup>706</sup> S. Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien* (Amsterdam: Verlag P. Schippers, 1961), 36.

<sup>707</sup> S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (The Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2004), 152.

some time in the exilic or post-exilic period when the monarchy was in complete decline, though we see no convincing reason to place it as late as the period of the Maccabees.<sup>708</sup>

What is significant to our task, however, is a discussion of the social values of the psalm. By using the concepts of what is trustworthy and enduring,<sup>709</sup> the poet has created a tension between YHWH's honor (vv. 2–19) and the king's shame (vv. 46–52) with the Davidic covenant acting as the hub around which the whole turns (vv. 19–38). The poet declares that YHWH is the glorious, righteous and incomparable God of salvation who has promised David an eternal throne, yet (despite being glorious) has allowed the throne to go in shameful defeat. Such a message *implicitly* casts aspersions on the honor of the deity himself.

Aside from the specific honor-shame statements of the poet that we will review soon, the contrast brought about by psalm's redacted structure serves to heighten the shame of the deity, much as we have seen in our analysis of Psalms 74 and 79. How glorious can the deity be if he is untrustworthy to fulfill his sworn word? How glorious to let his king suffer humiliation? His glory was to come from his fidelity to keeping David's throne secure.

Much of the vocabulary of this song has already been covered in our lexical chapter. For example, four times in verses 5–8 the psalmist declares YHWH incomparable in might and faithfulness among the divine beings (קדושים, v. 6; בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, v. 7; סוּדֹר-קִדְשִׁים, v. 8). The poet praises him for his mighty victory over the watery chaos (vv. 9–

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<sup>708</sup> The superscription in verse 1 in the MT and LXX associates the Psalm with the pre-exilic personage "Eitan the Ezrahite" (1 Kgs 5:11; 1 Chron 2:6; Psa 88:1) who was part of Solomon's court. Many of the psalms, however, have superscriptions bearing David's or Solomon's name, which likely came from later periods.

<sup>709</sup> In this category we include ideas like אָמֵן "firm" (v. 29), אֱמֻנָה/אֵמֶת "faithfulness," (vv. 2–3, 6, 9, 15, 25, 34, 50), חֶסֶד "loyalty" (vv. 89:2–3, 15, 25, 29, 34, 50) and the temporal concept of עוֹלָם/עַד "forever" (2–3, 5, 29–30, 37–38, 47, 53).

10, 13) in creation (vv. 11b–12a), leaving the world under his rule (v. 11). He is now praised for his loyal (חֶסֶד) and faithful rule (אֱמֻנָה). Those who walk in YHWH's presence (v. 16b) exalt in his name (v. 16a) and extol his righteousness. He is the “glory of their strength” תְּפִלַּת עֲזָמוֹ, and it is only by his favor that Israel's power is exalted (קִיּוּנוֹ [Q] בְּרִצְנוֹתָם). The fact that so many of the ideas are repeated heightens the superiority and glory of the deity even more.

The same can be said of the middle section. It is centerpiece around which the rest of the poem turns, and it also provides the impetus behind psalmist's accusations in the final section. This movement in the piece rehearses the promises given to David and center around two basic promises: YHWH has promised to give David victory (vv. 21–25) and a special relationship with him (v. 26) that will lead to his eternal preeminence throughout all the earth (vv. 28–38). The idea of firmness and eternality come into focus in this section.

The beginning of the lament—marked by the disjunctive *waw*, emphatic use of the person pronoun, and double mention of rejection (וְאַתָּה וְנִקְחָתָה וְתִמְצָאֵם)—does not just indicates a switch in subject matter, but signals a coming indictment that is no less negative in tone than was the effusive praise was positive. Whatever glorious reality the psalmist has depicted for Israel's deity in the first two sections, he now contrasts with the shame of the rejected king and his patron God. The last section is dominated by the king's humiliation. The qal of הָרָה is mentioned twice (v. 52), הִרְפָּה twice (vv. 42, 51), the qal of בּוֹשׁ once (v. 17),<sup>710</sup> and the noun בּוֹשָׁה once (v. 45). In addition, other concepts

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<sup>710</sup> While the psalmist asks YHWH to “put to shame” (i.e., suffer a humiliating defeat) Israel's enemies, the concept contained in such a request is for YHWH to reverse the current fortunes of the Israelite king and his enemies: raise up the one from the shame of defeat and lower the other through it.

underscore the David's shame: rejection (וְנִתְּנָה וְהִמָּצָא) in verse 38,<sup>711</sup> the king's crown being defiled in Sheol (v. 39),<sup>712</sup> the king's destroyed strongholds that are symbols of his might (v. 40)<sup>713</sup> and the rejoicing of the king's enemies (v. 43).<sup>714</sup> The king's further shame is underscored by the deity's ignoble failure. He has not supported the king in battle (v. 43), has removed the king's ritual purity (מִטְהָרִי) and tossed his throne to the ground (v. 44), cut his life short and covered him with shame (בְּוֹשָׁה, v. 46). The psalmist, who excessively praised the deity for his loyalty and faithfulness in the opening hymn, is only left to query: "Where is your former loyalty (הַפָּקִידִיךָ), O Lord? You swore to David by your faithfulness" (v. 49; comp. vv. 2–3).

As we have demonstrated, the threefold structure and artistic use of the hymnic, historical and lament forms emphasize the honor and shame values surrounding the historical failure of the Davidic covenant. The accusatory tone of the blistering cries in verses 50–52 are so severe in our view that the colophon added at the closing of the third book of the psalms seems grossly out of place (v. 53).

#### 4.3.2 The Hymn: Honoring and "shaming" the Deity (vv. 2–19)

In addition to how the hymn function in relationship to the other sections of the song, we merely point out that many of the material presented here is drawn from

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<sup>711</sup> There is a verbal resonance with 1 Samuel 15:26 and rejection of Saul (וְנִתְּנָה וְהִמָּצָא מִלְּךְ).

<sup>712</sup> The reference הָלַלְתָּ לְאָרֶץ נָדָרָה possibly just refers poetically to the ground, though as we have argued in the lexical chapter, references to the ground often have an association with Sheol (cf. 89:47–49), thus, the verse depicts the humiliation/demise of the kingship. The same can be said with regard to the king's throne in verse 44.

<sup>713</sup> We have noted previously that strongholds often have a negative connotation in the Hebrew Bible as they, along with armies and weapons, symbols of trusting human might over YHWH. Nonetheless, the strongholds are symbols of kingly might to the king's enemies who now taunt him. The same is true in Hannah's celebratory taunt with regard to broken arrows (1 Sam 2:1, 4). K. Whitlam, "The Symbols of Power: Aspects of Royal Propaganda in the United Monarchy," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 49, no. 3 (1986): 166–173.

<sup>714</sup> We recall that rejoicing and taunting are two sides of the same coin in victory (e.g., 2 Sam 2:1).



common stock with other hymns in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>715</sup> Nonetheless, we do find much overlap with the concepts present in David's praise in 2 Samuel 7:18–29. YHWH will be praised forever (2 Sam 7:26 // Psalm 89:2); YHWH is incomparable (7:22 // 89:6–8); he gives victory to his people over their gods (7:23 // 89:17); and Israel is special among the nations (7:23–24 // 89:16–18). YHWH will be praised forever (7:26 // 89:2), and the king's house will continue forever (7:29 // 89:5).

### 5.3.3 The Davidic Covenant: The Promises (vv. 20–38).

As we have said above, the middle “historical” section is the centerpiece around which the rest of the poem turns. It will be the proverbial launching pad from which the psalmist will hurl his questions concerning the deity's unfaithfulness. The psalm bears great resemblance in content to 2 Samuel 7 in many respects: promises to David come in a vision (7:4–17 // v. 2); David has been chosen from his people to be their ruler (v. 8); the deity is the king's father (7:14 // v. 26); David's throne and the covenant will be eternal (7:16 // vv. 22, 29–30, 35–38); if the king sins, YHWH will end the covenant (7:14–16 // v. 31–34), the king will be exalted and great (vv. 25, 28), YHWH will give him victory over his enemies (7:11 // vv. 22–25).

This similarity of themes, however, should not obscure the fact that there are significant differences of content that are used to develop many of the ideas that these two texts share (e.g., military victory, discipline). No matter what one decides on the textual development of 2 Samuel 7, the verbal expression given to the covenant in Psalm 89 is quite possibly conditioned by the historical realities of the psalmist and the

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<sup>715</sup> For example, YHWH is faithful to all generations (Ps 89:2; 100:5; 119:90); YHWH's loyalty extends or is as firm as the heavens (Ps 36:6; 57:11; 89:3; 103:11; 108:5; 136:5); YHWH is incomparable, especially among the gods (Exod 15:11; Deut 33:29; Ps 35:10; 71:19; 113:5; Isa 44:7; Jer 49:19; 50:44); YHWH's defeats chaos and Rahab (Exod 15; Job 9:13; 26:12; Ps 87:4; 89:11; Isa 50:2; Isa 51:9; Nah 1:4); and the foundation of his throne is justice and righteousness (Ps 89:15; 97:2).

development of the covenant within the cult.<sup>716</sup> The effect of these developments tends to elevate the king's glory in a way that 2 Samuel 7 does not do, while not contradicting it either.

For example, the victory over David's enemies is depicted as "rest" in 2 Samuel 7:11, while in Psalm 89, victory is expressed in great detail about how the king will outwit, crush, and defeat his foes (89:23–26). Such dramatic language accentuates the glory of the king in battle. In this way, honorific language saturates the entire section. In verse 20, David is depicted as a mighty warrior whom YHWH has honored with a crown (שְׂמֹנֶת עָזָר עַל־גְּבוּרָה),<sup>717</sup> he is especially chosen from among the people (הַרְיִמוֹתַי בְּחֹדֶר מַעַם). In verse 21, enthronement is paralleled by the honorific ritual of anointing David with his holy oil (בְּשֶׁמֶן קֹדֶשׁ מִשְׁחָתַיִי). As we noted, Israel's king will be exalted in victory over all of his enemies (vv. 23–26), including over the forces of chaos (v. 26). This promise reaches its zenith in verse 28, as David will become preeminent throughout the earth, the firstborn (בְּבִרְיָה) and above (עָלִיוֹן) every other king. He will be YHWH's son (v. 27) and have YHWH's enduring faithfulness (e.g., 34). Again, while an overlap in general themes exists, the detailed development of certain themes (enthronement and military superiority) serves to heighten the honor of the king by making him eternally preeminent in the earth.

In comparison, there is no *explicit* mention in 2 Samuel 7 that the Davidic king will be preeminent among the nations. David will be given rest from all of his enemies

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<sup>716</sup> Kraus notes, "We will rather have to assume that a basic prophecy which the prophet delivered to King David experienced a continuous cultic-prophetic reformation and contemporizing in the worship of the 'royal festival of Zion.' To the respective ruler—on the basis of the original prophecy—the election and inauguration by Yahweh were promised. In this way it could happen that constantly new conceptions and motifs crystallized in connection with the basic prophecy." H.-J. Kraus, 60–150, 208.

<sup>717</sup> As de Vaux notes, the crown is the "royal emblem par excellence." R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 103. Thus, it is the symbol of the king's glory (e.g., Job 19:9; Wis 5:16; Sir 1:11; 6:31).

(v. 11), but in 2 Samuel 7:10, David will just be given a name like all of the great ones of the earth (reading with the LXX: *וְעָשִׂיתִי לְךָ שֵׁם כְּשֵׁם הַגְּדֹלִים אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ*). He will not be “firstborn”<sup>718</sup> and “the highest of all of the kings of the earth” (89:28).

Most striking is the omission of any reference to the temple, which was a major facet of the original promises to David (7:2–7; 13) and is one of the greatest honors bestowed upon the Davidides. Had the temple been destroyed, one would have expected some mention of that fact when the psalmist makes his appeal to YHWH. This would especially be true in the post-exilic period that saw the re-establishment of the temple as a main goal (Hag 1:4). Possibly the temple has been rebuilt by this time, or possibly, as we believe, the topic was not the focus of the psalmist. For example, we might note that neither Psalm 74 nor Psalm 79 make mention of the king, though both psalms chronicle the destruction of Israel and the temple in grave detail. In fact, both psalms contain a cry for deliverance, but such a request is not attached to the concept of kingship, making the absence of kingship all the more surprising.<sup>719</sup> As unsatisfying as our solution is regarding the omission of these key interrelated institutions, it appears that even important themes can be elided if they do not comport with the exact purposes of a particular psalmist. Here, the glory of the kingship is not attached to the building of the temple. Lastly, it is noteworthy that the Davidic promises, unlike the Deuteronomic curses, make no *explicit* mention of shame, though we have argued that in the Deuteronomistic redaction brings out such an interpretation. It is to the issue of shame that we now turn.

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<sup>718</sup> The closest expression of this idea is found in 1 Samuel 23:1 David calls himself YHWH’s “favorite of the Strong One of Israel” (*נָעִים זְמַרְזֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל*).

<sup>719</sup> It should also be noted that there is no concern in Psalm 89 for YHWH’s promise to “plant” his people and grant them peace from their enemies (2 Sam 7:10). Such a promise is just as integral to the Davidic covenant, but seems to be elided due to the psalmist’s focus.

#### 4.3.4 The Lament: The shame of the house of David (vv. 39–52)

What is most striking about the comparison between 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 is *lack of explicit* shame statements in the former and the *proliferation* of such statement in the latter. What is clear is the royal ideology that the psalmist's community possessed did not embrace the concept of royal shaming. In 2 Samuel 7:14, YHWH promises that "As for my part, I will be his father. On his part, he will be my son. If he commits rebellion (בְּהִשָּׁחוּתוֹ), I will reprove him with a rod (or: scepter) of men (בְּשֵׁבֶט אֲנָשִׁים), with what mortals use (בְּנִגְעֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם)."<sup>720</sup> The psalmist complains, however, in verses 32–34 that "If they violate (חָלַל) my statues and do not keep my commandments, I will punish them with the rod of their iniquity (בְּשֵׁבֶט פְּשָׁעָם) and their iniquity with scourges (מִנִּיּוֹת בְּנִגְעֵיהֶם)." But what YHWH has done in the psalmist's eyes is remove his loyalty from David (contra v. 15). Nonetheless, what has happened to the king has been on par, in the view of the psalmist, with violating the covenant (לֹא-אֶחָלַל בְּרִיתִי).

Perhaps the tension we see between the 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 regarding the shaming of the king owes itself to differing royal traditions in Israel, much the same as we see regarding the formation of the monarchy itself. For example, the Deuteronomists seem to have no difficulties regarding the shaming of the king, while the Chronicler not only removes the reference to the king's discipline but also omits any reference to David's later moral failures. In any event, the psalmist sees the shame of the king as a divine breaking of the covenant and a blight on the deity's loyalty.

#### 4.3.5 Conclusion: Honor and shame in Psalm 89

In conclusion, while honor and at least the possibility of shame are not absent by any means from 2 Samuel 7 in its Deuteronomistic formulation, Psalm 89 deeply

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<sup>720</sup> As we noted in our discussion of 2 Samuel 7:14, the Chronicler omits the disciplinary clause.

struggles with the current and perhaps persistent realities of the shame of the throne. It brings out the honor of the king and deity in extreme detail, accomplishing this not only by the inclusion and extended focus on certain themes like military enthronement, victory in battle (or conversely loss of the throne and military defeat), but also by heightening these themes through the very structure of the psalm. These themes are not just pronounced, however, there. The psalmist uses the glory of YHWH, the honor he bestowed upon the king, and the current shame of the king as *the* basis upon which YHWH should act.

#### 5.4 Conclusion: Honor and shame in the Davidic Covenant

We have labored to show that honor and shame relate in two ways the Deuteronomistic incorporation of the Davidic Covenant. In the first part of this chapter, we attempted to show how Hannah's prayer worked as a type of prophecy of the exchange of honor that would take place between the northern and southern royal and priestly houses, leading to the election (honoring) of men who honor the YHWH, Zadok and David. The sin of both Saul and Eli's houses, as portrayed in interconnected themes of heart and eyes, were depicted as a failure to honor the deity, especially with regard to cultic matters. The dishonor their houses would receive was cast in terms of a diminishment of position, prestige, wealth and progeny, leaving their houses as clients of David and Zadok. As we argued, while David's honoring of YHWH was the basis of YHWH's decision to honor David with an eternal covenant, YHWH was never obligated to do so. By refusing David, YHWH would ensure that his decision would always be a free one.

In the second part of our argument, we see the same two concerns present, cult and kingship. YHWH would honor David's household in both, though the building of

the temple would have to wait until the reign of David's son. David's offer to YHWH, while ostensibly to honor the deity (who was still in a humble tent compared to the king who sat in glorious cedar palace) was also designed to solidify the king's reign, as he held it tenuously from various external and internal threats. YHWH's rejection of the offer is surprising, but no attempt is made in the narrative to chastise the king publicly for having committed an offense or besmirch the quality of his gift, *per se*. The view of the deity is that he has never asked for a cedar temple (to glorify himself). David affirms in his thanksgiving (ironically in YHWH's tent) is that YHWH's true glory is displayed to Israel, the nations and their gods through his military superiority and faithfulness to his promises, not through the display of monumental architecture. For this reason, David is not to erect a temple to solidify his kingdom by demonstrating his glory, but by trusting in YHWH to him a name like the great ones of the earth. And YHWH does this very thing in the subsequent chapters of Samuel, as David wins a name for himself by subjugating Israel's enemies with YHWH's strength. Lastly, YHWH's rejection guarantees that the deity's offer always be seen as free, not an obligatory act of thanks to the king for his gift. And once again, the thanksgiving section of 2 Samuel 7 underlines this fact. In these ways, the current text heightens the honor of YHWH and the king whose offer is rejected.

Thus, YHWH counteroffers the blessing of eternal legitimacy for the Davidic line that comes with the new status of sonship that was never offered to Saul. With this promise, however, is also the stipulation that such a position entailed royal discipline. While the understanding of such discipline is vague in context, the Deuteronomists shows that the Davidic king might be diminished by having his power and prestige stripped (Solomon) or being completely swept into exile (David). We have also noted how David's shaming (diminishment) parallels Saul's, save one fact: David's throne

never faced deligitimization as Saul's had. This same understanding seemed to have been carried into exile by prophets like Jeremiah who claimed the validity of the covenant in exile. One thing is clear: The associations of honor and shame more deeply permeate the Deuteronomistic ideology of Davidic Covenant against that of the psalmist.

It is our view, therefore, that honor and shame, as we have variously defined them throughout our discussion of the Samuel narrative, are inextricably woven into the very fabric of the Deuteronomistic concept of the election of the south and its reception of the promise of eternal prestige. Thus, if 2 Samuel 7 is central to Deuteronomistic history, as many scholars have maintained, so are the values of honor and shame.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### 5.0 Introduction

Our study has sought to fill the gap that has existed in biblical studies regarding how honor and shame operate in and perhaps even govern aspects of biblical Israel's concept of the divine-human relationship, not only between YHWH and Israel, but also between YHWH and the Davidides. And because of the enduring impact of Deuteronomy 28 and 2 Samuel 7 on Israelite literature, we chose to limit our investigation to these texts.

Our study sought to answer a few foundational questions: What are the various semantics of honor and shame conceived of in the biblical corpus? Do biblical writers represent honor and shame as *opposite, binary* values in the Hebrew Bible? And lastly, are these values pivotal to biblical Israel's understanding of divine-human covenants?

To answer these questions we stressed that the object of our study was biblical Israel, an Israel whose story has been selectively shaped for us, but whose social values has been woven into the very fabric of their story. What was critical, therefore, to our task was analyzing the language biblical Israel used to express its various concepts of honor and shame.

We found that at times these social ideals were sometimes conveyed in terms of the traditionally identified lexica (כבוד, בוש, כלם, etc.), while at other times the semantics of these values (e.g., high and low position) were embedded within the literary structure of a text. We did not, however, attempt to focus on how these social values reflected the historical reality of segments of ancient Israelite society or religion. For example, we did not investigate how honor and shame could have been used politically to further any



anti-Assyrian or anti-Babylonian ends that the biblical writers may have had. Such questions were beyond the foundational burden of this work.

Moreover, we gave no indications concerning how our understanding of divine-human covenants could influence our understanding of other covenants. Thus, for those scholars who believe that Israel's divine-human covenants reflect those made between people, possibly one may conclude that honor and shame are pivotal values in marriage covenants, peer covenants (Jonathan and David) or royal covenants (between the king and his people). That is to say, we might further investigate what role honor and shame play in biblical Israel's primary social structures. Our preliminary indications in chapter 2 point to the fact that honor and shame shaped biblical Israel's economic, political, social, familial, national, international life. And given the prophets' ready use of, say, the marriage analogy in texts like Hosea 1–2, one could make a case that honor and shame play an integral role covenants in general, though we would need to test this assertion more rigorously. In any event, this chapter aims to summarize the answers we have given to these questions above and to point the way forward for future studies of biblical and other ancient Near Eastern literatures.

## 5.1 The vocabulary and concepts of honor and shame

As we have noted, to date no scholar has attempted a large-scale, systematic study of the concepts of honor and shame in the Bible, though there have been some outstanding studies on the concept of shame and various other lexical studies on honor vocabulary. Thus, we have sought to establish a basis for a future research and to answer the questions we have outlined above.

Regarding the question of whether biblical authors understood honor and shame as binary opposites in the Hebrew Bible, we have seen that the issue is not clear-cut

from a linguistic standpoint. Shame and honor are indeed opposite concepts when represented by כבד (being or becoming heavy / important) and קלל (being or becoming light / unimportant / nothing)<sup>721</sup> or רום (being or becoming high, lofty) and שפל (being or becoming low).<sup>722</sup> In contrast, other “shame” roots such as בוש, חרף, or כלם do not seem to have an antonym. The same could be said of honorific phrases like עשה שם. What is more, our study of בוש revealed that it is far too complex to capture with any single English equivalent, but that the experience of בוש in defeat could carry with it humiliation, disappointment, shame, and the like.

We also saw that once we had identified a concept of honor or shame behind certain lexica (e.g., קלל / כבד), we could also identify texts that were “unmarked” for these social values but still contained the concept. For example, the shame of Eli’s house is “marked” with the קלל / כבד distinction (1 Sam 2:30; 3:13), while the fall of Saul’s house is not. But as we demonstrated, the large numbers of thematic parallels between the two narratives definitely cast the fall of the house of Saul as a shaming / diminishing (קלל). Therefore, honor or shame could greatly aid our understanding of the social context of a text, despite the fact that a passage is “unmarked.” The same was seen in Deuteronomy 28, which we shall review shortly.

Regarding the centrality of these concepts to the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic expression of the Davidic covenants, we saw how the various words, idioms and actions that communicate honor / honoring and shame / shaming are applied to social, political, religious and military position or esteem. The numerous terms and ideas that we identified seem to pervade every area of life and include such things as

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<sup>721</sup> For example, see 1 Sam 2:30; 2 Sam 6:22; Isa 8:23; 23:9

<sup>722</sup> For example, see 1 Sam 2:7; 2 Sam 22:28; Isa 2:11–12, 17; 10:33; 57:15; Ezek 21:31; Ps 18:28; 75:8; 138:6; Dan 4:34; 5:19.

the following: moral or immoral conduct for men and women,<sup>723</sup> military successes or failures, the establishment or disestablishment of political and religious houses, the acceptance or rejection of international relations, economic fortune and loss, and various proper and improper aspects of cultic activity. Even more importantly, we saw that given the results in our vocabulary chapter that such concepts could be readily applied to the biblical covenants under question. Even so, it appears to us that nearly every aspect of Israelite life was in some way shaped by honor and shame.

## 5.2 The Deuteronomic Covenant (Deuteronomy 28)

Our analysis of a core aspect of the Deuteronomic Covenant, the blessings and curses, showed a marked usage of the concepts of *honor* and *shame*, despite the fact that such words do not appear in the context. Deuteronomy 28:1, in fact, summarized the covenantal blessings: “YHWH your God will set you high above all of the nations” (הָאֲרָצִים (וְנִתְנָהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עָלֶיךָ עַל כָּל-גּוֹיִי). That the passage is about honor is confirmed by a parallel construction in Deuteronomy 26:19 that lavishly employs honorific terminology (לְתִהְיֶה וְלִשָּׁם וּלְתִפְאָרֶת וּלְהִיָּתָר עַם-קָדֹשׁ). Moreover, verse 13, which ends the blessings states, “YHWH will make you head and not the tail” (וְנִתְנָהּ יְהוָה לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב). Thus, two general honorific statements act as “bookends” to Israel’s blessings. We even explored how certain blessings themselves were informed by the concept of honor. For example, we see the abundance of wealth (v. 4), the growth of children in one’s house (v. 4), and the defeat of enemies (v. 7). Therefore, it appears that honor, in the form of pre-eminent economic and political position and esteem, is a pivotal to the Deuteronomic understanding of loyalty and blessing. Honor is the motivation and divine gift for loyalty.

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<sup>723</sup> While not a focus of our study, we have indicated that female honor is not merely relative to her sexuality, as supposed by many pan-Mediterraneanists whose works we referred to in chapters 1.

With this in mind, the curse section was to be understood as a binary opposite to blessing section, given the high number of verbal resonances between the two blessing and curses sections. Among the various statements that would communicate shame, we find verse 43. Resident aliens (תּוֹרֵם), the defenseless social group in Israel who needed Israelite patronage to survive, would “raise higher and higher above [them]” (מִנְעֵלָה מִנְעֵלָה עַל־יָד מִנְעֵלָה), but “[the Israelites themselves] would descend lower and lower” (מִנְשָׁה מִנְשָׁה). And should Israel be disobedient, she would become the tail and not the head (וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה זָנָב). More importantly, as the first section closed with the act of honoring (the statement of being the head and not the tail), the curse section would end with a much more devastating act of divine shaming.

Israel’s captors would attempt to sell them as slaves in Egypt, but Israel would attract no buyers (28:26). This punishment would ensure that God’s people would be without divine or human patron and, in essence, make Israel socially non-existent. In fact, we saw in many cases how shame was equivalent to death itself.

Thus, while no traditional “shame” words appear in the passage (e.g., בּוֹשׁ, חָרָף or כְּלָם),<sup>724</sup> we have shown that by using the semantic concepts of “high” and “low” position and prestige that undergird the Israelite conception of honor and shame, we can see that both values inform a central aspect of the Deuteronomic covenant. It was no surprise, then, to find that such values were equally as important to the Deuteronomistic writers in their expression of the Davidic Covenant.

### 5.3 The Davidic Covenant

Our argument about the Davidic covenant was more complex. It not only involved an exploration of the covenant itself, but the election of David, the man whom

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<sup>724</sup> The plural of מִנְעֵלָה appears in verse 15, but just appears to mean “curse.”

the Deuteronomist would depict as deeply concerned with the YHWH's reputation. But since the Davidic covenant involved cultic and royal promises, it was important for us to trace these lines and their connection to honor and shame in the foregoing Samuel narrative.

We argued that the Song of Hannah, with its emphasis on the raising up of those in low positions and the diminishing of those in lofty positions (1 Samuel 2:4–8), adumbrates the fall of both the northern priestly and royal houses (Eli and Saul) from their positions of honor and the rise of the new priestly and royal houses that YHWH will choose (Zadok and David). The old houses would be diminished in terms of position, progeny and prosperity, and both would become clients of the houses that would replace them (2:36; 2 Sam 9:6).

Because Saul and Eli possessed an inferior “heart” (character), they would treat YHWH as if he were insufficient for respect (בִּזְיָה) in the cult (1 Sam 2:29–30; 15:1ff.). In turn, YHWH would diminish their houses (קָלַל). Moreover, for both Eli and Saul the theme of “heart” is connected to that of “sight.” The narrative of Eli is punctuated by continual references to his failing sight and judgments on his sight. For example, we are told that Israel's purveyor of revelation was not able to see (1 Sam 3:2) and that visions were rare in those days (v. 1). He is judged for “looking” greedily on YHWH's sacrifices (2:29). As a punishment, he will longingly “look upon” the prosperity of Israel (v. 32), and the member of his house that is left is to go blind and (לְכַלּוֹת אֶת־עֵינָיו) and to mourn in his soul (לְאָדִיב אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ) for those who are dead. Eli ends up blind, his sons slain in battle and the glory of Israel departed. In Eli's place, YHWH promises in 1 Samuel 2:35: “I will establish for myself a faithful priest who will do what is in my heart and soul” (יִעֲשֶׂה וְקִבְּלֵתִי)

(וְהַקִּימֹתִי לִי כֹהֵן נֹאמָן כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּלִבִּי וּבְנִפְשִׁי). Ironically, it would be Saul who nearly decimates Eli's line (1 Sam 22:16): only Abiathar survives (22:20).

With regard to Saul, it is not his own sight that is at issue, but what others suppose of him because of his height (1 Sam 9:2; 10:23). Saul is to be the answer to the Philistine challenge, exemplified in the giant Goliath. When Samuel presents Saul to the people, he refers to his height and says, "Do you not see the one whom YHWH has chosen? There is none like him among all of the people" (10:24a). To this all of the people shouted in acceptance (24b). But the Israelite giant lacked the heart of the Philistine giant and more importantly, of David, too, whom YHWH had chosen over his taller brothers based on his heart (16:7).<sup>725</sup> David, motivated by YHWH's honor, would have to buttress the failing heart of the king and all Israel (17:32) before slaying the Philistine hero. In due time, David, would bring victory over all of the Philistines, be crowned king of Judah (2 Sam 2:4) and subsequently Israel (5:3). He would even achieve international notoriety (1 Sam 21:11 [Philistia]; 2 Sam 5:11 [Tyre]). David gains pre-eminence as king over all Israel, a growing house (that includes Saul's wives and daughter) and military and political dominance. And with a gift of a palace from Hiram, David would enjoy a measure of peace. Conversely, the Philistines would slay Saul and three of his sons on Gilboa (1 Sam 31), Ishbaal's men would behead him (4:7), and Michal would seal her own childlessness after denouncing David (2 Sam 6:20–23). Eventually, Solomon would dispose of Abiathar, fulfilling another curse on Eli's house. In the same way, the lame Meriba'al would be left as a client of David's house.

In this way, we can see that Deuteronomistic shame is represented as a diminishing of one's household and a relegation of their house to dependence on the

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<sup>725</sup> One might say that Saul and Goliath shared one thing as their respective peoples' giants, a belief that YHWH could not bring victory over the Philistine giant.

house that YHWH chooses. Sometimes this status change is marked with explicit shame language, as in the case of Eli, and sometimes not, as in the case of Saul, whose diminishment paralleled Eli's in significant ways.

We also aimed to show how the Deuteronomist used honor and shame to inform YHWH's rejection of a costly cedar temple under David. YHWH's rejection of David's offer was designed to glorify the deity in a way that accepting David's offer would not. First, by rejecting David's gift, YHWH shows that his glory does not depend on monumental structures (2 Sam 7:7), but on his military ability to secure peace for his people and win David a name (v. 11; cf. v. 13). Second, YHWH rejects the offer because his granting of an eternal covenant should appear free (v. 20). His election of David and the granting of the covenant are to be seen as stemming from his generosity. Third, by building a temple, the text presents David as seeking to secure his throne by building a glorious monumental structure. YHWH promises to secure David's throne with his own power (v. 26), thus, glorifying himself in a way that David could not.

The Davidic line would receive a new position before YHWH, sonship (v. 14), which not only would secure the Davidic line, but also imply that the deity would discipline, even greatly shame, any Davidide who would violate (the Deuteronomistic understanding of) the law. We saw two confirming examples where YHWH would severely discipline but not delegitimize the Davidic house: David's temporary exile and the loss of the ten northern tribes in the prophecy against Solomon.

David himself would suffer a number of shaming judgments: YHWH would diminish his house with the death of his four sons (2 Sam 12:19 [unnamed son]; 2 Sam 13:29 [Amnon]; Absalom [18:14]; Adonijah [1 Kgs 2:25]), the king would lose his position to his son Absalom for a time (2 Sam 15ff.), his son would shame him by sleeping with his ten concubines (16:22), and David would suffer the insults of Shimei

as he was thrust into exile (16:1–14). Solomon would suffer a diminishing depicted in a ritual, symbolic humiliation. The shame of Solomon's diminishment of power is seen in the prophetic act of the tearing of the garment in twelve pieces and giving them to Jeroboam (1 Kings 11). YHWH would give ten of Solomon's tribes to his ablest servant, Jeroboam. One should note that even though this acts diminishes Solomon, it is semantically opposite in every way from making David a name like all of the great ones of the earth. Still honor and shame are binary, opposing values. Thus, using honor and shame as a lens through which to understand the Deuteronomistic understanding of the Davidic covenant had great explanatory power.

In either case, however, when we understand how honor and shame are variously understood and represented in biblical literature, we can see how they play a central role in biblical Israel's understanding of her relationship with YHWH in Deuteronomy 28 and 2 Samuel 7. What is more, these values often, though not always, appear in binary opposition to one another. What one makes of these results for the purpose of comparative anthropology is beyond the scope of this work.

#### 5.4 Future Directions

Because there is almost a complete dearth of attention paid to honor and shame in the covenantal traditions of the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East, this study promises to be a first step toward more in-depth studies about how honor and shame inform other biblical covenants such as the Abrahamic promises [Gen 12], the covenant in Genesis 15 [J], and in Genesis 17 [P]. Moreover, it is our hope that this study will also pave the way toward a better understanding of the social values of other cultures in the ancient Near East. In this way, we hope that future comparative work will be solidly



grounded in individual studies of the literature and material culture of each ancient Near Eastern society.

#### 5.4.1 Honor and the Abrahamic Covenant

We believe that the Abrahamic promises and covenantal traditions are fertile ground for future research on Israel's social values. In fact, honor is a key aspect that bridges the primeval history and the Abrahamic promises. In the Tower of Babel narrative, we find the unified human attempt to re-order YHWH's divine-human social order. The account begins by underscoring the complete unity of human civilization. They had a common language (v. 1), a common geography (v. 2) and a common purpose to build a tower to "make a name for themselves" (v. 2–3).

There is, however, also a possible grasping of divine status. "They said, 'Come, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower (מִגְדָּל) with its top in the heavens, and let us make for ourselves a name (נַעֲשֶׂה-לָּנוּ שֵׁם) lest we be scattered over the face of all of the earth.'" Moreover, the unity of humankind implied that they would be able to achieve anything they wanted to do (v. 6), perhaps suggesting they were grasping at YHWH's divine place (Job 42:2).

We will note two things about the phrase נַעֲשֶׂה-לָּנוּ שֵׁם: (1) "making [Abraham's] name great" is one of the main blessings of the Abrahamic promises (12:2); and (2) the phrase primarily concerns honor. As we have seen, this phrase is used in 2 Samuel 7:23 to describe the glory of YHWH, who becomes famous by doing incomparable military acts. "Who is like your people, like Israel? Is there any other nation on earth whose gods went to redeem for themselves a people and to make a name for themselves and to do great and awesome acts from before their people whom they

redeemed for them from the Egyptians nations and their gods?”<sup>726</sup> The same idea is present in 2 Samuel 7:9b, “I will make a great name for you, like the name of all of the great ones of the earth (וַעֲשֶׂתִּי לְךָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל כְּשֵׁם הַגְּדֹלִים אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ),” and the Deuteronomist claims its fulfilled in 2 Samuel 8:13. This same phrase occurs in 1 Maccabees 3:14, “I [Seron] will make a name for myself (Ποιήσω ἑμαυτῷ ὄνομα) and win honor in the kingdom...” (δοξασθήσομαι ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ). Seron tries to accomplish this by conquering his foe in battle (cf. 1 Macc 5:7). Thus, as we have noted, there is an attempt to gain dominance through their temple building.

Their unity and intentions disturbs YHWH. He responds by “coming down” to evaluate them (v. 5) and he surmises, “They are one people, and they have one language, and this is [only] the beginning of what they could do! Now nothing they intend to do will impossible for them” (לְכֻלָּם וְזֶה הַחֵלֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לֹא־יִבָּצֵר מֵהֶם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יִזְמוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת) (אָהָר וְשָׂפָה אֶחָת; v. 6a).<sup>727</sup> As a result, he confuses their tongues and scatters them over the face of the earth.<sup>728</sup> It is in this context that YHWH will make a name for Abraham (Gen 1:1–3). And the J text of Genesis will end when Jacob blesses Judah with the symbols of kingship: robes and a ruler’s staff. And with these in hand, he will be pre-eminent over his brothers and the nations (Gen 49:8–12). Thus, a brief sketch of the relationship between the primeval history and the Abrahamic promises reveals the central role that honor has in YHWH’s promises to Abraham and the divine plan in Genesis.

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<sup>726</sup> The LXX reads differently at several points, though still has the same sense. Most notably, the LXX reads τοῦ θεῶσθαι σε ὄνομα (to make yourself a name) instead of שֵׁם לִי (lit., to make for himself a name).

<sup>727</sup> See the NRSV.

<sup>728</sup> In a way, this episode resembles a type of exile, for which the Mesopotamian nations like Akkad and Babylon were famous. Part of the purpose of exile was to dilute the strength of a nation by geographically scattering it among other peoples that spoke various languages.

#### 5.4.1 Priestly Conceptions of Honor, Shame and Covenant

During our study, we noted how the Priestly approach to the Davidic covenant was quite sensitive to the issue of shame, for example. We proposed that the Chronicler consciously attempted to minimize any shame associated with the David and the oracle he received. Conspicuously absent were the discipline clause from Nathan's oracle and the discipline that David suffered for the Bathsheba episode. Thus, in many ways, the priestly school was quite sensitive to the issue of honor.

Moreover, we think that much more attention needs to be paid to the intersection of holiness, honor and sacred space. We noted in our lexical chapter the association between holiness and honor and the removal of sandals (Exod 3:5; Josh 5:15). And with the diminishment of the honor of the northern priestly and royal lines comes an inextricable transfer of honor from the central northern cult sites to Jerusalem. The ark, representing the glory of the YHWH, departed from Shiloh and will find its final resting place in Jerusalem under David. Jerusalem is later understood to be the "holy city" (Neh 11:1, 18; Isa 48:2; 52:1; Dan 9:24; 1 Macc 2:7; 2 Macc 1:12; 3:1; 9:14; 15:14; 3 Macc 6:5; Matt 4:5; 27:53; Rev 11:2; 21:2, 10; 22:19).

In addition, there are several key texts in Priestly sources that we have not explored, but need to be. For example, one associated with the exodus-inheritance tradition in Numbers 14:11 is a good example. YHWH says to Moses, "How long with the people despise me (וַיִּבְזְאוּ)?" That is, Israel thought little of YHWH's ability to preserve them in the wilderness, despite all of the powerful signs of his deliverance. For dishonoring him, he would destroy them and make a mighty nation out of Moses (v. 12). To avert such a disaster, Moses appeals to YHWH's sense of honor in verses 13–16:

The Egyptians will hear about it, that you brought this people out from among them with your might, and they will tell the inhabitants in this land...but if you kill off this people *at one time*...it is because YHWH is

able to bring this people to the land which he swore to them and slaughtered them in the wilderness.

Moses then appeals to YHWH's honorable character, namely that despite being just, he is slow to anger, faithful and forgiving of iniquity (v. 18). Thus, YHWH preserves his glory by forgiving the people but barring them from seeing the holy land. The whole generation will be killed off in a period of forty years. Thus we can see from the perspectives of covenant, sacred space and exodus-inheritance traditions, a separate treatment of the priestly view of honor and shame would prove fruitful.

#### 5.4.2 Comparative studies of covenant in Ancient Near East

As we stated in our introduction, this study has focused on honor and shame in biblical Israel and therefore has consciously refrained from making wider cultural connections between Israel's social values and those of the ancient Near East at large. Such attention is long overdue, however. And we believe the next step is to understand honor as it is verbally expressed and ideologically conceptualized in the various literatures of the ancient Near East (e.g., Ugaritic, Hittite, Assyrian, Egyptian, etc.).

For example, a superficial survey of Ugaritic literature unsurprisingly reveals similar formulations of honor. In the Ba'al myth, 'Ilu says to his messengers, "at the feet of 'Anatu bow and fall, do homage and honor her" (*[ ... l p]ʿn . ʿnt yhbr . w yql . yšt]ḥwyn . w y kbdnh*; cf. Pss 29:1–2; 86:9; 96:8–9).<sup>729</sup> The recognition of high status is thus publicly demonstrated by the ritual act of falling at the feet of the superior. Secondly, *ql* and *kbd* operate as semantic opposites, though here *ql* is synonymously parallel to *ḥwy*. Moreover, both the Ba'al myth and Psalm 96:8–9, for example, associate honor with the presentation of offerings to honor the recipient ('Anatu or YHWH, respectively):

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<sup>729</sup> COS 1.86 (1:241). The phrase is somewhat stereotyped throughout the Ba'al cycle.

<p>Baal myth: Present bread] offerings [in the earth,  place [love-offerings] in the dust;  [Pour well-being out] into the earth,  [calmness into the] fields.<sup>730</sup></p>	<p><i>[qryy . b arṣ . mlḥ]mṯ .</i>  <i>št bṣp[rm . ddym .</i>  <i>sk . šlm] . lkbd . arṣ</i>  <i>[arb dd . lkbd . š]dm</i></p>
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Psalm 96:8–9 Ascribe to YHWH the honor of his name (כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ), take up an offering and come into his courts (שִׁאֵר־מִנְחָה וּבָאוּ לְתַהֲרֹתָיו).

As we have seen in our study, refusing to show proper deference to those in high position either communicates disrespect or, as in the case of Yammu and the gods, is a public claim for higher position. In CTA 2, Yammu instructs his messengers to go to ʾIlu and the Great Assembly and refuse to bow or prostrate themselves (COS 1:246). The messengers instruct the divine assembly to “give up the one whom [they] obey” and to submit to Yammu.

When the assembly sees the messengers of Yammu, the gods take a posture of deference or mourning: they bow their heads “onto their knees, onto their princely thrones.” Once ʾIlu hears their message, he uses characteristic language of deference to a superior and promises the appropriate gifts to Yammu. He tells the messengers, “Baʿlu (is) your servant, O Yammu, Baʿlu (is) your servant, [O Naharu], the Son of Dagan (is) your prisoner. He will indeed bring you tribute, like (one) of the gods he will bring [you a gift], like one of the sons of the Holy One (he will bring you) presents.”<sup>731</sup> Our brief example shows that there are some verbal and ritual aspects of Ugaritic mythology that appear to communicate the same social values that we have found in the Hebrew Bible. While we would caution against drawing any conclusions about cultural continuities and discontinuities between the two at this point, we can at least

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<sup>730</sup> Ibid, 1:244. We have broken the lines of the Ugaritic to correspond with the English translation.

<sup>731</sup> Ibid, 1:246 (i.36–38).

see that, at a glance, once a study is conducted of Ugaritic literature, a comparative study between the two cultures shows some promise.

With regard to covenants, Olyan has already given us several indications of the relationship between honor and shame and covenants in texts from Mari, the Amarna archive and Assyrian materials. With regard to the Amarna texts, for example, Olyan notes:

Hierarchical, reciprocal honor is also evidenced among vassals who compete for position in a status hierarchy controlled by their human suzerain. In EA 88:46-47, Rib-Hadda of Byblos protests jealously to the pharaoh that 'the messenger of the king of Akko is more honored than (my) messenger' (*mār šipri šar Akka kabbit ištu mār sipr[īya]*). EA 245:39 is similar. Here, *kubbutu* and *qullulu* are contrasted, not unlike their cognates כָּבֵד and קָלַל in 1 Sam 2:30: the pharaoh has 'diminished' Biridiya, his vassal, and 'honored' his less important' fellow vassals ('brothers' in the covenant idiom).<sup>732</sup>

In analyzing Hittite treaties such as the treaty between Šuppiluliuma and Aziru, we do not find such easy assessments of honor and shame. There are honorific references to the covenantal parties, but they focus on the honor in the form of covenantal loyalty, to be an enemy against the sovereign's enemies (e.g., ii 9–56; iv.19–26). The curses do contain a diminishment of the Azira's household: "...let these oath gods destroy Azira [together with his head, his wives, his sons, his grandsons, his house], his town, his land, and all [his possessions]!"<sup>733</sup> Certainly some of the curses in Deuteronomy 28 contain this same concept, though one would have to establish that the idea of "destroying" one's household is equivalent to *qalālu*. This does not appear to be the case, as the blessings on Azira's household are "protection," and there is at least no explicit statement regarding raising the status, prosperity or esteem of the vassal, as we saw in

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<sup>732</sup> S. Olyan, *Covenant Relations*, 207.

<sup>733</sup> COS 2.17A (2:95).

the blessings of Deuteronomy 28:1ff. And while in all likelihood one could understand how honor would operate in this context, there is no sense in this treaty that these blessings are a means to pre-eminent status. There may be implicit, embedded values in the treaties that need to be explored, but the explicit honor and shame statements of Deuteronomy sets the Israelite covenant apart.

We find the same results when we examine other Hittite treaties. For example, there is an emphasis on the demand for exclusive vassal loyalty in the treaty between Mursûili and Duppi-Tešub. But there is no such reference to raising one's status or esteem. The same could be said of the curses and blessings in the treaty between Šuppiluliuma and Aziru. They do not seem to have any sense of raising a vassal up for covenantal loyalty. The treaty between Tudḫaliya and Šaušgamuwa is also mainly focused on single-hearted loyalty of the suzerain to the sovereign (A ii.8–19), who is described as being an enemy to the sovereign's enemies and friends to the sovereign's friends (e.g., A iv.1–18). Lastly, in the treaty of Tudḫaliya IV with Kurunta of Tarḫuntašša, we see, as we might expect, honorific titles that Tudḫaliya gives himself ("Tudḫaliya, Great King"). Moreover, as the sovereign, he promises to honor his vassal with an eternal covenant (§20 ii.95–102, iii.1–20; §21 iii.21–31), similar to 2 Samuel 7. In addition, in §17 ii.67–78, we find some concepts of diminishment that might parallel those we discussed in Deuteronomy 28. For example, we read the promise: "...Let him not allow them to be killed or demoted"<sup>734</sup> and "if some difficulty"<sup>735</sup> befalls the

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<sup>734</sup> Hoffner's tentative translation of the Luwian *zantalanuna-ya* is "based upon the apparent alternation with *tepnummanzi-ya* in line 77." COS 2.18, n. 24.

<sup>735</sup> The same Hittite verb *nakkišzi* occurs below in §21 iii.22, 28. Whereas here in §17 (ii 76) it is parallel to *wakšiyazi* "is lacking" in ii.74, later in §21 it is parallel to *GÛB-lišzi* "something unfortunate happens."

descendant of Kurunta, let my son or my grandson compensate him in the same way; let him not allow him to be either destroyed or diminished.”<sup>736</sup> Still these concepts would have to be studied in greater depth to establish how much they resemble Israelite concepts that are ultimately linked with their particular concept of YHWH. That is to say, it is understandable for Israel to be raised in status by their covenant because, in essence, YHWH has chosen them to be his only vassal at Sinai. They are YHWH’s *סְגֻלָּה* “treasured possession” (Exod 19:5; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18) and “holy” people (e.g., Deut 26:19; 28:9; Isa 62:12). Since he is the supreme God by their covenant with him, they are placed above all nations. None of these covenants expresses any such privileged position.

Because Assyrian treaties do not have blessings, there is no stated way the vassal is raised in status or esteem through their loyalty. The curse section, however, contains numerous verbal parallels to those curses found in Deuteronomy 28, though there is no clear reference to shame as in Deuteronomy. In particular, in the ritual curse portion on stele I of the treaty of Bar-Ga’Yah and Mati’el (lines 35b-42), we read several acts that could be considered symbolic performances of shaming by Israelite standards and likely by Assyrian standards as well. Note that the breaking of the bows symbolize the military defeat of Mati’el and his nobles; blinding the wax man or cutting in half of the wax calf defaces (and kills) Mati’el and his nobles;<sup>737</sup> stripping the harlot symbolizes the

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<sup>736</sup> COS 2.18 (2:100).

<sup>737</sup> Mati’el and his honored nobles are depicted the animals that are cut in the covenant ceremony. COS 2.82 (cf. Jer 34:18). While the cutting of animals is ceremony is excretory in nature, the symbolism may go beyond enacting the type of death the men will suffer. Possibly the use of animals also functions to shame the vassal. Many of the accompanying actions are shaming in this section of the treaty: defacing a body through burning, breaking the bow of the enemy (military humiliation), stripping their wives naked, and striking on the face. Thus, possibly, the idea behind the cutting of the ox is to say, in essence, that the king and his nobles will be slaughtered like animals. While representing a ruler as a lion depicts their power, but Nebuchadnezzar is described unflatteringly as birdlike in Daniel 4:27, a humiliating punishment receives not confessing that his glory is from YHWH (v. 32).



stripping of Mati<sup>c</sup>el, his sons and his noble's wives (cf. Jer 13:26–27); and the striking of the wax woman's face also appears to be a shaming gesture by Israelite standards. Because there is no parallel blessing section, we have no statement akin to making Mati<sup>c</sup>El "the tail." And because there is no exodus ideology in Assyrian literature, there is no sense that Mati<sup>c</sup>El will be an unwanted slave.

Again, we are not trying to draw equivalences but merely to point to surface connections that deserve deeper study if scholars are going to pursue comparative studies of honor and shame across the ancient Near East. Scholars will need to examine the linguistic and ritual expressions of shame and honor in each nation's body of literature and at each point in that nation's history. But one must also try to understand what lies beneath such rituals or expressions. For example, the loss of virginity in Israelite culture is shaming, as it is in Bedouin culture. But the former is a landed society that depends on virginity for the proper retention of lands for tribes, where the latter society is not landed. Before comparing these cultures, one might ask how, for example, the specific role of inheritance rites impact these values.

Even with due caution placed on making easy comparisons between honorific language and customs in different cultures and especially at different times, we hope to show that studies of honor and shame could be applied fruitfully to ancient treaties.

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